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THE
Preparation of Ryerson Embury

A Purpose

BY
ALBERT R. CARMAN

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" . . . But, looking deep, he saw
The thorns which grow upon this rose of life ;
How the swart peasant sweated for his wage,
Toiling for leave to live."—*The Light of Asia*

Second Edition

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The
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I

THE January moonlight lay white upon the Canadian college town of Ithica. In fields and vacant lots, where the crust of the snow was unbroken, the eye was conscious of vast stretches of ethereal purity which stirred in a sensuous way the moral faculty and flooded the emotions like a strain of lofty music. Only the hard glitter, when the moon's rays fell upon a bit of icy coating here and there, brought a reminder of the edged cold that was cutting the face. The scattered houses, as they sat at a respectful distance from each other in their comfortable gardens, were made up of sharp patches of milky whiteness and dark shadow; and often the moon upon a window made a brighter light than the lamp that lit its shaded neighbour.

Close-muffled groups were coming with crunching footsteps up various streets, and converging on a small church in the suburbs which seemed

bursting with light. Presently along the middle of the road from the College "residence" briskly marched a column of young men, generally silent, though some broke into snatches of Sankey airs occasionally, and their singing and bits of chat sounded crisp and sharp across the nipping air. Ryerson Embury approached the church alone along another street from his boarding-house. He had debated much with himself about attending the "revival" that night. Study claimed him, especially when he remembered that his chief rival for class honours would cynically lock his door on all invitations to "come out to meeting to-night" and sit at home plugging away until midnight without so much as getting drowsy. But Ryerson's people were religious, and they liked him to write home that he was attending the "meetings." And there were other reasons. The emotional surge of the "revival" rolled pleasurably through his blood; and the neat-fitting, fur-trimmed jacket, as it embraced the *petite* form of Grace Brownell, when she stood for a moment warming her toes at the roaring box stove at the rear of the church, was pleasant to see. Then there was always the chance that he would walk home with her after the meeting.

As he swung along under the bright stars, with the sheeted lights of the "aurora" gliding and leaping in shivery silence all across the northern sky, he liked to feel the tingling air on his house-

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fevered cheek, though it compelled him to rub his ears at times. The board walk snapped beneath his feet with the intense frost; his breath blew out like smoke before him. Turning in through the open church gateway, he stamped the loose snow from his rubbers in the porch, and then pushed open the swinging doors that gave directly upon the church itself—a plain room, a little longer than wide, with a platform at one end carrying a simple pulpit.

“Hello, Ryerson! Glad to see you out.”

This greeting, which met him just within the church door, was from an open-faced young man with brisk manners, a classmate of Ryerson and one of the “workers” at this revival. Ryerson shrank from it, though responding. He felt that he was being patronised by one who believed himself to be in a superior position. His manner said to Ryerson’s sensitive ears, “I am ‘saved,’ and I am nobly labouring to put you in the way of obtaining the same advantage.” Ryerson passed on to a seat not far up, and presently saw the fur-trimmed jacket come, coquettishly warm itself a few moments at the fire, become conscious of his presence and then of that of two or three of the “workers” near the door, exchange a little whispering with a couple of girls for whom he felt non-sympathetic, and then go demurely in the wake of the family up to a pew much nearer the front than his.

Miss Willmott, organist to the little church and maiden aunt to all the boys in the neighbourhood, was playing Sunday School airs on a diminutive and short-breathed church organ which occupied the extreme right of the generous platform at the upper end of the room. The people, as they gathered in the front pews, joined in singing the familiar "gospel songs" which Miss Willmott was playing. The church filled up slowly with an unusually assorted congregation. The battalion of College boys, of greater age and more studious appearance than that term means to the general ear, sat, a solid mass, up one side of the room. The "godly women" of the neighbourhood, clothed with that plain severity which evangelicalism still requires of its votaries in the rural sections, made the large body of worshippers in the rest of the church. Their daughters accompanied them in many cases, and sometimes an earnest-faced husband, whose rapt attitude and nervous lips proclaimed him a man of marked religious fervour. The boys, when they came, showed a love for the back seats and a wistful enmity toward the "College chaps." The scholarly faces of a few College Professors, and the brighter dresses of their wives, were sprinkled throughout the gathering.

The meeting began; and hymns, laden with emotional reminiscence, and an impassioned prayer swollen by cries of "Amen, Lord!" "Do it, Lord!"

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"Come in mighty power!" from among the kneeling congregation, prepared them for the sermon and exhortation to follow. As they rose from their knees, tears shone in some eyes, others openly wiped them away, and here and there were faces bright with ecstasy whose lips moved in eager prayer. Even to the unmoved, the air seemed laden with a subtle something that had not been there before.

The preacher was an old man with a crown of grey hair, clean-shaven face and firm, mobile lips. His eye had a penetrating power, and when he spoke of the impossibility of hiding sin under a cloak of morality, it fell upon each hearer like an accuser. His sermon began with the love of Christ, but was soon an exhortation to all those "out of Christ" to seize upon the present offer of salvation, driven home with terrifying incidents illustrating the dangers of delay.

It all fell upon the naked soul of Ryerson Embury with undiminished force. The lad had not so much as a fig-leaf of doubt upon him to lessen its impetus. When the preacher quoted Scripture, Ryerson heard the voice of God, and knew himself for an outcast. For he had little hope of salvation. He had "heeded the call" before at more than one "revival," but had never obtained the "blessed assurance" that his sacrifice was accepted on high. To this school of theology, a man could become certain of heaven by repent-

ing his sins and "crying to God for mercy," when the Holy Spirit would communicate to his spirit—if his repentance was accepted—an unmistakable assurance that he was forgiven.

When the preacher talked of some being hindered because keeping back from the sacrifice "some darling sin," Ryerson's heart laughed with angry scorn within him; for eternity was to him a reality, and in moments of revival exaltation he would have literally cut off his right hand to be sure of salvation. He had prostrated himself before this awful God again and again, imploring Him to cut deep into his heart, if there He saw a sin that "His servant knew not of." But He had neither cut nor yet "spoken peace" to this throbbing, boyish soul.

When the "seekers" were invited to the front at the close of the sermon, Ryerson looked toward Grace Brownell, and, as he expected, saw her leave her seat and go quietly up to the rail about the platform, in front of which she knelt, resting her brow upon it. This was her fourth night of "seeking," and she now went to the front without any hesitation or visible emotion. Ryerson had not gone "forward" this revival. The memory of past failures kept him back.

Quite a number were presently kneeling "about the altar," which was the manner in which the participants in the "revival" signified that they

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were seeking the forgiveness of the Almighty, and awaiting His assurance of acceptance into the Kingdom. Singing and praying alternated irregularly, and the tenseness of the emotional strain increased. Fervent ejaculations fell on the superheated air from the kneeling figures in all parts of the church.

The "workers" moved from seat to seat, speaking to those who had not gone "forward" about their soul's salvation. Of these moving figures, the preacher of the evening was the most conspicuous, with his noble, snow-crowned head and his lighted countenance, proclaiming exaltation of spirit. Several young men were quietly questioning and talking, chiefly among the boys at the rear of the room, while a number of earnest-faced women moved with doubtful success about the pews where sat the phalanx of unsaved students.

"Come to Jesus, come to Jesus,
Come to Jesus just now,"

an aged, quavering voice began singing among the front seats, and here and there, throughout the church, other voices joined in.

"That's it!" whispered a young man to a lad he was pleading with just across the aisle from Ryerson. "Come now; come to Jesus. He is waiting. He is willing and eager to save you. You cannot be sure of to-morrow. God may call you

to-night. He may call you before you are out of this church. This may be your last chance. 'Now is the accepted time.'

The lad looked stolidly into the back of the pew in front of him, and said nothing.

"What are you waiting for?" asked the "worker."

"I don't know," in spiritless tones from the lad.

"It will never be any easier," persisted the young man.

"Almost persuaded, now to believe ;
Almost persuaded, Christ to receive,"

came in the high, pure notes of a woman's voice across the fervid air. Very few joined in this hymn, and these only in a low murmur; for the singer was a Professor's wife, who sang with rare sweetness and penetrating power.

"God help him! Christ save him! Forgive, Lord, forgive!" broke in strong, vibrant, impassioned tones from a bearded man who was kneeling beside a weeping youth across the church. The maker of the prayer had thrown himself back on his heels, so that his body was upright, and had raised his arms high in supplication. "Look down upon Thy contrite son!" he shouted, and went vehemently on pleading for forgiveness for the sobbing boy.

"Your mother is praying for you, my son," said a low voice at Ryerson's side, and a hand fell

caressingly on his arm. He quivered under the blow upon his highly-strung emotions, and his mind became a whirling mass of longings and fears, and home-sick pictures of mother-filled scenes. Swiftly he decided to try it again, and amidst cries of "Bless the Lord!" "Save him, Lord!" "Forgive, forgive!" he went to the altar with the rest and was soon pleading with the old hopeless fatigue for the "salvation" that would not come. Toward the close of the night's meeting, he was sensitively conscious that Grace had arisen, and was saying in a faltering voice that she had at last "found peace."

His familiar failure lay chill upon him, and a gap seemed to widen between them. He had meant to wait for her when the meeting broke up, but she and her mother remained talking for a time with a group of the "workers," and he presently slipped out into the cold, and ploughed down the snowy road alone.

For a time he practically abandoned study at night, and attended the meetings with dogged regularity, going to the "altar" as a matter of course at the first invitation, and waiting with fevered weariness, interspersed with periods of passionate, wordless prayer, for the "witness of the Spirit" that his repentance was accepted. There were moments of ecstasy when he had thought it had come, but they contained nothing that seemed to him to be the intelligent message of an intelli-

gent God to an intelligent being. This certainty—this unmistakable speech of God to the spirit—of which the “converted” spoke so confidently, he could not get. He tried to find out from several approachable people just what their experience was when they “heard the still, small voice,” but the result was not satisfactory, and left him under the impression that several people who thought themselves “saved” might wake up on judgment day and find themselves mistaken.

One morning, while sitting in his room, Hallam in hand, really in doleful consideration of his humiliating plight, he suddenly came to the conclusion that he would devote himself to God’s service in the world without any promise from the Deity of salvation. Plainly he could not get that promise. Very well. He would find God’s work and do it, and God could damn him then if He wanted to.

It appeared at the moment, as his generous impulses rose, that personal salvation was a pitiable thing to be begging for anyway. He would be a man; and if he went to hell, he would go as a man. A loathing of himself as he had been for the past week or so, swept over him. He had read something more than pity in Grace’s eyes. Was it contempt? Yet she believed that he was doing right in “seeking salvation.” But was there not a woman in her that lay deeper than this religious

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life which, he had to confess, she carried more lightly than he had expected; and did not this woman judge him and condemn? Would it not be nobler to save others than to cry perpetually to be saved himself? But then, again, did not the Bible say that he must be saved himself before he could save others?

Doubt thickened before him again. It was easy to talk, but every Christian worker in the world had got saved himself first. How could he hope to break a new path? Well, at any rate, he would take his damnation standing. He would fight as hard for right as he could—he would give his life up to it. The innate sense of justice in the lad forbade him to say that a God of Justice would permit such a life—could he achieve it—to end in failure and punishment; but he saw no farther ahead than that he would take the straight path and plod on, whether recognised by the Great Captain or not. His courage may have been stimulated by a budding doubt as to the absolute truth of the teaching of his “pastors and masters,” that this path of agony and humiliation and the “witnessing of spirit with spirit” was the only path to Heaven; but, if so, he was hardly conscious and undoubtedly not certain of it himself.

He did not go to the “meetings” again.

II

RYERSON had been pleased from the first to note that Grace's "conversion" did not materially affect her personal attitude toward himself. But it had done another thing that he liked much less. Because of it and of her consequent attendance upon certain religious services, an intimacy had grown up between her and a young divinity student, a year ahead of him at college but several years the better in assurance and *aplomb*. Worse than that, the divinity student, whose name was Walters—Arthur Drake Walters—was welcomed at the home of the Brownells as he, Ryerson, never had been. This wrought him into a spirit of antagonism to "religion," as represented by Walters and the too frequent meetings, that otherwise it is not likely he would have developed.

Spring helped him, however, by turning the world out of doors, making a standing welcome to the Brownell home of less strategic importance, and diminishing the regularity of attendance at the dangerous "services." One day, when the sun lay bright on the glossy new leaves of the trees, and spring flowers were to be found by the knowing in

secluded nooks and on the dry knolls that slope up to the trunks of uncrowded trees, Ryerson sat studying at the window of his room. His eye, when he raised it, carried two or three streets to the west if he manœuvred it so as to avoid intervening trees and houses. His notes on the constitutional history of England lay in his lap, and he was trying to rivet his attention upon them; though sadly disturbed by the circumstance that when he lifted his eyes to test his memory, the shimmer of the spring day fell upon them, and a sense of its beauty flowed in through them and filled him with a languorous longing to be at large and idle in the scented wood. The sight of the cramped writing of his "notes" revolted him. They suggested the hot, close air of his room of a winter night when they had been written out, the paper of his lampshade browning with a dull odour and the frosted windows hiding from him even the snow-blanketed garden.

Presently his truant eye caught sight of a wide hat he was not unacquainted with, moving along toward the river two streets away. It was unmistakable. The little head that it engulfed was as plain to him as if he saw it. The lithe, easy and girlishly buoyant carriage he did see; and also caught the flash of a small, brown covered basket which hung lightly upon her arm.

"Going for May flowers," he said under his breath. "I wonder—yes, I've time enough. I'll

work to-night." And in a moment his book of "notes" was dumped on the table, which was its proper place on such a day, and he had fitted on a 'Tam-o'-Shanter, and was hurrying down the street to intercept the flower gatherer a few blocks farther on.

Turning up a side street, he found himself still behind the light figure with the swaying skirt and the wide hat. She was not moving rapidly, for the day was deliciously warm after the long winter and the uncertain spring, across whose sunshine a keen wind had commonly blown; and then the little head within the spreading hat may have known that it is not good for a girl to pass too quickly away from the streets of the town where sympathetic companionship is more easily to be picked up than out in the empty wood. He had not followed far, however, before a little lift of the head betrayed that she was conscious of someone's approach.

"Going for May flowers?" he asked, stepping alongside and lifting his "Tam."

"Why, Mr Embury!" she said, with a quite wasteful quantity of surprise in her voice and "start," for it did not deceive Ryerson in the slightest. "I thought you would be studying very hard just now," she added as if explaining something, though just what did not appear.

"Oh, I am usually," said Ryerson; "but this afternoon was too much for me."

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"Isn't it splendid!" she agreed with enthusiasm, looking at him from under the long sweep of her hat with a pair of blue eyes that danced with the pure pleasure of life on such a day.

His eyes gave a wordless answer that said more than any comment on the weather called for. It is the privilege of young eyes to be thus lavish. Experience has not yet taught them the necessity of keeping superlatives in reserve for great occasions. Then he withdrew his eyes with a toss of the head, as one who would repudiate a too ardent messenger and said in a tone of over-conscious carelessness,—

"It is a great pity for any of us to stay mewed up in the house these days; especially for you, who have nothing to keep you there. Why don't you go out more?"

"Nothing to keep me there?' I suppose you think I have nothing to do," she said with a pout; and she tilted her face up that he might see the pout and be repentant.

"Oh, you do enough in some ways," he replied a little distantly.

She divined at once that he referred to her attendance on religious services, and became quiet; her face meantime wearing the look of one who feels that she ought to say something very impressive, but knows neither what to say nor how it would be received. Presently she went on, however.

"I do a great deal at home—more than you

would think. Then I have to practise two hours every day; and papa is leading me through a course of reading. I like that, however."

"What are you reading?" asked Ryerson.

"Oh, we are always reading two books," she explained, "one heavy and one fiction." It was worth something to see the sweet gravity of her face when she said "one heavy," and the lofty toleration, a little conscious of its insincerity, with which she added "and one fiction."

"Just now," she went on, "we are reading Livingstone's *Travels in Africa* together, and I am reading Barrie's *Little Minister* by myself. I suppose you've read them both?"—regretfully.

"No," Ryerson answered, though he was thinking more of the exquisite droop of her mouth, that showed when she was serious, than of any book. "I read *The Little Minister* last summer vacation, but I have never had a chance to read Livingstone."

"I'll lend it to you when we are through."

"I'm afraid that I sha'n't have time for it this year."

"No, I suppose not. How did you like *The Little Minister*?"

"Oh, I don't know. Well enough, I guess. But I think it is not true to nature. I don't think that a bright girl like Babbie would fall in love with a stiff and starched minister like Gavin—eh—what's his name?"

"Did you really think that Babbie was nice?"

she asked in petulant protest. "I think it's—it's—strange the way she runs around and puts herself forward."

"But there was lots of fun in her."

"Would you like your sister to be that kind of a girl?"—severely.

"It would be better"—and he laughed—"to have her somebody else's sister."

"Well"—stiffly—"that may be your idea of a nice young lady, but I think it was very unnatural to make a clever and—a—a good young minister fall in love with her. He was far too good for her." This last defiantly.

Then there was silence for a time. The "stiff and starched minister" and the "good young minister" had both spelled Walters to Ryerson; and a touch of sullenness lay upon him. They had reached the "Common" now that stretched between the town and the wood, and their feet fell soft on the fresh sod.

"Won't you let me carry your basket?" he asked presently.

"Oh, it's not in the way there," she said, lifting her arm a little to show how lightly it swung. She had put on a pair of old gloves for plucking the flowers—kid gloves that, grown too small, fitted her slim, soft hands snugly, but let you see the rosy flesh of her finger-tips through some unmended rips. Ryerson looked at them with greedy eyes as he kept step with her over the

grass. He knew the hands would be very white if he could pull off the gloves—white and soft and kissable, and the palms would be rosy. The thought of it hurried his blood in its pulsings and peeped shyly from his eyes. Grace looked up and caught it there. Her hands moved out in a quick gesture, a flush came into her cheeks, and then she dropped her eyes. The rhythmic pacing over the grass went on until they came to the edge of the wood, when he said, as if speaking in the presence of something sacred, yet something asking great tenderness,—

“Which way do you want to go, Grace?”

It was all in the “Grace.” It was not often that he had called her that, and she thrilled under it now. Neither of them could have accounted for the mood into which they had fallen. A question about it would have dispelled it. But it was real enough, though as evanescent as the youth and the spring-time of whose meeting it was born.

“But,” Grace answered—and it was not a very relevant reply to his question—“Babbie is so different a kind of girl from—well, from any of us around here.”

“Yes,” he replied a little absently, not following the direction of her thought; “she was not like you.”

“Is that”—and she laughed constrainedly—“the reason you called her ‘bright’?”

“No, no,” he laughed back right scornfully;

"but I thought she was too good for that preachy 'little minister.'"

She looked troubled. "You should not say such things about ministers."

"Why? Are they special friends of yours?"

"No, not that!"—eagerly—"But—you know I mean ministers in general—ministers like Dr Holden."

"Oh!"

And they looked at each other again with quick exchange of thought, their eyes saying things they would not have cared to put in words.

Then they moved on along the path that led through the wood toward the river. This bit of woodland which lay near the town was, by reason of its neighbourhood to rectangular houses and properly shaven macadam, a very demure representation of nature; and it wore its bright spring dress daintily. Enough of the brown wreckage of last year lay between the trees to sharpen one's appreciation of the vivid freshness of the new green; and the vitalising power which ever fills the warm spring air blended with the visible renewal of life all about them to pitch the consciousness of these two youth-shod mortals at a singing note.

"Now look carefully," said Grace, lifting a gloved finger, "and see which of us gets the first flower."

"Oh, you will," replied Ryerson; "I can never see any flowers at first until someone else has

found a few and I get used to the sight of them."

Presently uttering an exclamation, she pushed through a slight tangle of underwood, and was kneeling in the midst of several bunches of hepatica.

"I win, you see," she cried, still kneeling and looking back at him over her shoulder.

"Yes," he said, coming up to her; "and now you will have to let me hold your basket for you while you pick them."

"These are not for the basket; they are for a buttonhole."

"Whose?"

"For"—and she stopped as if considering—"for someone who does not think a tom-boy nicer than—than—" And she suddenly dropped her eyes, which had been laughing up at him, and began to pick the delicate pink and white flowerets.

"Than whom?" he insisted, stepping nearer.

"Oh, bother! No one," she half whispered with a confused laugh.

"Oh, yes," he persisted. "You meant someone. Now, who was it?"

"The flowers are for you," she said abruptly, getting suddenly up from her knees and standing before him with more red in her face than even the kneeling posture would account for; "and if you do not straighten back, I'll never be able to

put them in your buttonhole. Which side?" she asked as he, alarmed at this danger and reading in her face that the subject was not to be pursued with safety, lifted his head, and presented his lapels to her. "The left, I suppose. You haven't a pin, of course. Men never do."

"Don't they!" said Ryerson, jealous of this wide experience.

"There," she went on, ignoring his remark and pinning the bunch of flowers firmly into place with an accompanying compression of the lips that left them a deep scarlet. Then she patted it into order with her finger-tips, coming closer to do it; and, looking up at him from under her broad hat brim, said, "Don't you think it is pretty now?"

He looked down at her fresh face in which the colour came and went so easily, into her limpid eyes and at her parted lips, the face of a child speaking for the white soul of a child just waking to woman's sweetest heritage; and he, with his new manhood clogged by his boyish helplessness, answered his simple "Yes." But as she turned from him quickly and made her way back to the path again, before he could clear the road for her, he felt that he had not been wholly misunderstood.

After that they went joyously on together, gathering flowers where they found them, and blithely exchanging more or less sincere opinions about all sorts of men and things—and the doings

of girls. This last was perhaps the most fruitful theme, for Grace had many judgments to deliver along this line which she did her best to make charitable; and Ryerson liked to watch her self-portraiture as she approved and disapproved of the conduct of others. Then she asked about some of the students whom she knew but slightly, and Ryerson gave them characters which, it is to be feared, depended less upon the actual deserts of these worthy young men than upon the likelihood he thought there existed of them becoming better acquainted with Grace and rising to favour in her eyes.

Down by the river, she thought it necessary to take off her gloves to wash the tips of her fingers from the earth that had clung to them when pushing down for the bottom of unusually short stems.

"Let me help you," pleaded Ryerson, as the too tight gloves proved stubborn.

She gave him her hand, and he held it firmly with one of his while tugging at the glove-fingers with the other.

"No, that is not the way," she protested. "You should take the glove by the other end and pull it off, turning it inside out."

He obeyed, and the tender white of the hand from which the blood had been so long compressed, stirred him with a strange sex force. Then he took the other hand and began the same operation. What would he give to kiss it? Well, why

not? He looked at her, and she was smiling slightly at the slowness of his efforts. What would she think? Could he not say something to carry it off?

"An' now, faire ladye," he said grandiloquently, "by your leave!" And he stooped as if to kiss the fingers, but pressed instead a strong kiss on the soft back of the hand. Grace reddened, put her hand nervously behind her when he had released it, and said, "How silly of you!" but with marked insincerity in her tones.

III

SATURDAY afternoon, flooded with sunlight and the mild, stimulating air of spring, found Ryerson tramping through this same wood to the music of—

“The shades of night were falling fast
U-pi-dee, U-pi-da,
As through an Alpine village passed
U-pi-dee-i-da.”

His blood sang with the music, and a conscious pleasure ebbed and flowed through him, sometimes carrying a little fulness into the throat; for was he not in good company—the company of “men” who knew the world and made merry in it, “men” whose gay poise of mind he had always envied, and whose pleasures he had coveted a share in? A classmate of his, Harry Gault, who lived in Ithica, had taken him once to an oyster supper which began at the fascinating hour of midnight, where these light-spirited “men” of twenty, more or less, formed the bulk of the company. There were a number of other collegians present, but most of them were older than Ryerson, both in years and in the world of the “town,” as con-

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trusted with that of the "gown." The festivities were of the frolicsome order; Billings of the science department, and Madden, a law student, cooking the oysters on the kitchen stove of the private house they had secured for the occasion, owing to the temporary absence of all the family save a son; while a couple of athletic young men gave an exhibition of "ground and lofty tumbling" in the parlour. Then there was singing, "stag" dancing, uproarious joking and a college recitation or two. The party was broken up at 4 a.m., owing to the protests of a querulous neighbour who could not sleep well for the racket.

To-day some of these same "royal spirits," as they appeared in his lad's eyes, were off for a country walk, and happy Ryerson was in the company. In front strode three choristers, all blessed with good voices and carrying heavy cudgels. There was Paterson, a divinity student, McNeill of the Merchant's Bank, and "Shorty" Batters, who figured on the college rolls as a "pass" second-year man, but who was really known as the bass in the Glee Club. This trio led the singing as well as the procession, and their choice varied from "Polly-Wolly-Doodle" to "Only an Armour Bearer."

Next them walked, frequently out of step, Madden of "Webster, Saunders & Webster, Barristers and Solicitors," and Chalmers, unattached industriously at present, for his father

was wealthy, but giving his time to a society of scientific research in the town in the capacity of secretary. They were discussing with earnestness, but a great show of toleration for each other's views, the probable effect of protection on Great Britain. Later they considered the authenticity of the miracles; then touched on Darwinism, from which they vaulted lightly to the standing of the legal profession and then back again to Biblical inspiration. Next walked Ryerson, flanked by his chum Gault and a graduate of the college rejoicing in the thirst-suggesting name of Pitcher; and all three talked with great freedom of expression about the personal characteristics and relative merits of the various College Professors. Behind them came a singing quartette who were often a word or two slower than the three leaders, a circumstance that gave rise to mutual recrimination from time to time.

It was only when they kept to the country road that wound through the wood, following roughly the winding of the river, that this formation could be observed. If they dropped into the narrow footpath which sometimes cut off curves in the road or oftener kept to the river bank when the carriage way deserted it, they fell into single file; and at other times they spread out in skirmishing order, and swept irregularly through pathless sections of the wood, plucking flowers or clashing each other with stocks of dead "burrs." But

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always on reaching the road again, they fell into much the same grouping, though at times all were talking and none were singing, and again all would sing and none would talk.

Ryerson drew many a deep, pleased breath as he looked about him, caught the fragments of frank and unshackled talk that came from the "men" with whom his light feet were keeping step; and, best of all, found that some opinions of his own, whose unlikeness to those he usually heard had made him fear that his mind was abnormal if not malignly mastered, were in this company accepted as coin of the realm.

At one point the path led to a high and dry resting place on the edge of a pigmy bluff overlooking a modest gorge through which the river had worn a way.

"Let's take recess," suggested McNeill. "This is an elegant place to camp."

"Ah," observed Pitcher, dropping down on his side and elbow, "one must come to such a spot to see that spring has really arrived."

"Isn't it great?" gurgled Madden, rocking to and fro with his hands locked over his knees. "Why do we ever have anything except spring?"

"Give it up. Ask the parson!" suggested Batters.

"Well, parson, what have you to say for yourself?" queried Madden, turning cheerfully to Paterson.

"Oh, many things if I felt like it," responded Paterson, airily. "Why, for instance, should we have Maddens when we might all be like myself, and — Embury here, eh?" — smiling gaily at Ryerson. "Simply for the sake of variety. You would not appreciate us if there were not a few of the other kind to show us off well."

"Say!" broke in Batters, "Did you fellows hear about Hughson and 'Grampy' Wilson?" Hughson was more properly known as Professor Hughson and filled the chair of chemistry at Ithica College; while "Grampy" Wilson was a worthy student of unpolished manners and more age than was usual among the "boys" of his class.

A general negative being forthcoming, Batters went on. "Well, Hughson is so blamed slick, you know, that it occurred to him that he might score off poor 'Grampy' yesterday in chemistry class. The lecture was on ammonia, and he brought a bottle of it with him—one of those elegant, cut-glass bottles of his. The idea was to pass the bottle about for the boys to smell and then enjoy the situation when 'Grampy' got a good whiff. Great idea, but in a moment of weakness he let Webster into the plot, getting Web to stand next to 'Grampy' and show him how to take a fine deep smell. What did Web do but pass the word on to 'Grampy' himself, with a hint to pretend to be gagged by the stuff and then drop the fine new bottle. 'Grampy' caught on at once,

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and when Hughson gravely handed the bottle to Webster, and said 'Now, Mr Webster, the best test of ammonia is, perhaps, the odour. See if you can manage to distinguish any characteristic scent,' the boys said that it was worth a meal at the Russell to see 'Grampy' hold on to himself so he would not snort right out. When Webster, after pretending to smell deep and long, passed the bottle to him with, 'I think, professor, I can detect a faint odour,' 'Grampy' shook and gulped and, lifting the bottle to his nose, really got quite a stinger, then shouted out, 'Goodness! Gracious!' at the top of his voice and smashed the professor's cut-glass bottle on the floor. Oh! it was great. Hughson didn't even smile, and dismissed the class two minutes after."

That reminded Pitcher of a similar thing that happened while he was at college; which left Madden no alternative but to tell of a law office escapade, and so it went. Then they got into politics, but soon tired of it, watching rather the leaping river and the fair blue sky. Presently Chalmers observed, adjusting his spectacles and smiling drily about the corners of his mouth,—

"You'd better attend to Madden's theology, Paterson."

"Yes?" from Paterson.

"He 'don't know' more things about the Bible than any person I ever met."

Madden straightened up from a sprawling atti-

tude, grinned aggressively at Paterson and awaited his comment.

Paterson looked lazily into the deeps of the wood and then said, as if reluctant to speak at all, "He will have to call on me during office hours."

"That's the modern preacher for you!" shouted Madden, derisively. "He never works overtime. You'll do, my boy, when you graduate."

"Bosh!" replied Paterson, with the directness of college discussions. "You don't know what you're talking about, and I don't want to waste my powder on you this afternoon."

"P'r'aps I don't," said Madden, with a know-more-than-you-think grin, "and p'r'aps you'll tell us, as a light half-holiday starter, how two contradictory accounts of the same thing can both be true."

"Ingersoll and water!" retorted Paterson.

"All right!" said Madden, shaking his head, and then continued, "How about Joshua's raid? Did the Lord command him to do all that wholesale killing of innocent people?"

"But," interjected Ryerson, venturing in, "they were opposing the will of God."

"Yes, by resisting an unprovoked assault on their homes and lives, just as you or I would have done," returned Madden, vehemently. "Is patriotism a bad thing? Then, moreover, the Bible says that the Lord hardened their hearts so that they would fight Joshua so that he might have a chance to kill them."

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"Don't you believe all you hear," Paterson advised Ryerson.

"You take your Bible when you get home and look along in the first of the book of Joshua, and you will find what I said is true," Madden assured him with conviction.

Ryerson smiled doubtingly, but felt timid, as if in a strange land.

"Perhaps that passage ought not to be in the Bible," suggested Pitcher. "I heard a preacher the other day who told how the Bible was made up. They voted on the books and sometimes the voting was pretty close."

"You're thinking of the Old Testament, Pitcher," said Paterson, "and these men were supposed to have acted under divine guidance."

"Like the 'stationing committee,'" commented Batters, sarcastically. The "stationing committee" is the body which in Canadian Methodism annually "locates" the ministers.

With that the discussion drifted off on the rearrangement of the ministers likely to take place at the coming Methodist Conference, and presently they were all up and away again across country to another road which led back to Ithica through the little country village of Glen Ewart.

"What d'ye say, Madden, to taking the parson to Josie's and getting him a pint of something—or a ginger ale?" Batters inquired from the rear of

the column of the merry, elastic-mouthed law student who was marching in front.

Madden looked at Paterson, with whom he was walking, with apology in his eyes, and tossed back, "Oh, shut up!" to the jovial Batters. He liked to bait the parson on theology, but he had a profound respect for what he considered his prejudices.

"I'll go, if Batters will treat," said Paterson, promptly.

And they went and got their ginger ale, punctuated with a "beer" or two, in a stale-smelling parlour off the "bar" which Josie's papa kept; but they saw nothing of Josie. The red-figured tablecloth covered the round centre table; the prints of astonishing horses and ensanguined Oriental scenes hung upon the walls; but the bright-eyed Josie with her masses of black hair and her dancing step, and her suggestion of bounding life within, was not there.

"Josephine?" answered her father as he deposited the last amber glass on the red tablecloth. "Sure, she's gone fur her mewsic lesson. She's gettin' to play fine now, Mr Batters. She can ma-ake a pianny sound just like a band when she's feelin' well."

On the way up the village street they met her walking demurely along with a large music book under her arm, and a furtive smile of welcome on her face. There was pride in it, too, for was she not engaged in the business of brain-culture like

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the rest of them. Batters, who was leading, doffed his hat and stopped. The girl also stopped, answering his greetings with frank pleasure, and taking his introduction to the newcomers—Pater-son, Ryerson and a couple of the others—with an air of liking it which was quite different from the studied reserve Ryerson had been accustomed to see in his girl acquaintances.

"So you are taking music this spring?" said Madden, familiarly.

"Yes," she replied with a pleased smile, "and father says that perhaps I may go to Miss Taylor's Academy in Ithica in the fall."

"Oh!" they chorused in congratulation.

"Well, we will be glad to see you in town, Josie," said Batters with a touch of patronising good humour.

She just perceptibly winced at the "Josie," but laughed her acceptance of the welcome without affectation. "Well, I must go," she said, and started briskly off, when her music book struck a picket in the fence with considerable force and fell straddling open to the ground.

Ryerson was the nearer, and so picked it up and set it to rights. As he gave it back to her he said, in a polite little way he had, "I hope, Miss Fitzgerald, that it is not hurt."

"Oh, I think not," she assured him, looking at him individually for the first time, and evidently with approval, whether for himself or for his mode

of address which had nothing of "Josie" patronage in it. And then she walked with her springing, light-footed step up the street. She walked as if she liked it, much as a "blooded" horse prances from pure delight in its power to prance when it is fresh to a good road and the air is inspiriting in its nostrils. Her smooth, firm cheek, her resolute mouth, her eyes that faced that band of mocking collegians with a knowledge that they knew more than she about many things, and yet without fear, stayed with Ryerson more or less throughout the walk; and, for the life of him, he could not help contrasting her with the more sheltered development of Grace Brownell. Upon the one, hardly a zephyr had blown; the other had blushed at the flying compliments of half-drunken men in her father's parlour and was on her defence against mankind.

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IV

THE annual examinations were coming on now, and Ryerson began to live with his nose in his text-books. On fine days he would sometimes stroll off along country roads or wander into the woods, but always with a book in his hand, and the slightly moving lips of a memoriser. Sundays, however, brought him a complete release, for he was thoroughly convinced that the Sunday rest helped men to achieve their immediate and temporal ends. His chief competitor in his own class worked as hard on Sunday as on Monday; but this did not disturb Ryerson, for he had beaten the "Sabbath-breaker" before now under precisely these conditions. And his Sundays were luxuriant oases in a desert of brain fatigue. From Monday until Saturday he kept his mind on a tread-mill; but on the Sabbath it took happy note of the advancing spring, dipped as deep as fancy favoured into the emotions of youth, and lived in companionship again with the town world of Ithica which apparently knew not that the examinations approached. In the morning, if the day were fine, he took any fragment of fiction he had at hand out with him to

the river bank, and there lay on the fresh sod, reading as it pleased him, and looking away when inclined to the swirling, eddying river, the idle wood and the restful, distant sky. After dinner he went to Sunday school, and was pretty sure of being permitted to walk home with Grace Brownell afterward. Walters was there too, but Grace generally happened to escape from her group of girl friends at a time when Ryerson could hardly fail to reach her first. On one occasion Walters had joined the group of girls in the church and tried to detach Grace, but the manœuvre had not been a success. Grace had had something particular to say that afternoon to her friend, Dora Norris, and had walked with her all the way home, leaving the venturesome Walters to a noisy little frump with a squat nose, who "Oh, Mr Walters-ed" him to the point of disgust. At church in the evening it was different. There Grace sat with her parents—a square-jawed, massive father, and a short, aquiline-nosed mother—and walked home ahead of them through the quiet dark. Walters had of late generally walked with her and was always asked promptly in by Mrs Brownell—a doubtful advantage, for on the rare evenings when Ryerson had adroitly succeeded in carelessly stepping up to Grace first, he had liked best of all the few minutes spent with her at the gate alone.

He had seen little, too, of late of his friends of the walking party. One Sunday morning Madden

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had found him in the wood, and had bewildered him with cynical talk about the contradictions of Scripture and the bad logic of Christian doctrine. Ryerson had valiantly replied for a time, but the lad had had no training that fitted him for the contest. But when Madden incautiously attacked the sincerity of professing Christians, he found himself beating upon flint. Ryerson had not lived his life among Christian people without knowing that, at all events, they were entirely sincere. He admitted that the true coin was counterfeited there as elsewhere for selfish purposes; but he knew that the bulk of the church people of his acquaintance believed the teachings of the old evangelical Christianity. Soon Madden shifted back to his first ground of attack, and left Ryerson at his door, when they had walked, with vehement and exciting discussion, in from the wood, with his brain hot and pulsing within him. His mother's letter of yesterday lay on his study table. He felt a bound of gladness in his heart that he had stood up for her religion, and for her sincerity. Of course, she believed her religion. How hopelessly Madden misunderstood the church people. But yet he felt that he had not been very effective in his defence of that religion. Madden had quoted Scripture to him, whose meaning he had never studied, and had shown him the relations of this passage to that in a way he had not dreamed of. He had been surprised to find, for instance, that

he had no consecutive idea of Christ's life in his head. When Madden had asked him at what period in his career Christ had driven the money-changers out of the Temple, he could not even make a guess. Madden had then laughingly said that he might have tried with safety, for the incident was put at three different dates by the four evangelists. Ryerson knew that there must be some reply to this, but he did not know what it was. As soon as he got time, he would study and find out. It was absurd to suppose that all the wise men of the world had read this Bible, and believed it to be true, and had never seen these fatal contradictions, but that it had been reserved for a contentious little law student of the town of Ithica, Ont., and a few others like him probably in other towns, to upset the faith of the Christian world. Why didn't preachers preach about these things, and arm their congregations for such encounters?

That was a work he might do.

The thought fell on him like an inspiration. It was true that he could not get "saved"; but had he not devoted his life to God's work? His own failure to get saved would hinder him from saving others, but there was no reason why he should not fight a tremendous battle against sharp-shooters of the Madden band. Cold intellect could do that; and—well—God might pity him at the last. He would have a talk with Dr Holden, the most

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scholarly clergyman he knew, and find out how the question stood. Probably his whole work would be to take the learned conclusions of theological masters and write them out in plain language.

Examinations began, and Ryerson's brain became a dump cart which he packed full of a subject, emptied what was asked for in the examination hall, and dumped the rest on his way to his lodgings that he might have room for the next load. They finished on a Thursday afternoon, and Friday and Saturday he wandered about in a state of semi-coma. Grace was away over Sunday; other examinations were still in progress; and he wanted nothing but sunshire on his back, and security from disturbance to his brain torpor.

Sunday morning he went to church. It was a luxury to feel that the world was so full of woodland rest days for him now that he could afford to spend the morning in church if he wanted to. The sermon was on the familiar parable of the "talents"; and the preacher perpetrated the usual mild pun, sanctified by churchly usage, and dwelt upon the duty of each to use what talent he had to help on God's work. This revived Ryerson's determination to see Dr Holden and prepare to meet the minor guerrillas of infidelity. After church he caught the doctor just as he was pushing open his front gate.

"Doctor!" said Ryerson, panting a little from

nervousness. "Do you think you could give me an hour's talk sometime on—on religious matters?"

Dr Holden looked at the younger man from out of his benevolent, studious eyes as if searching for the meaning of this request; and said presently, "Nothing would please me more. Could you come this afternoon?" and he smiled a welcome.

"Yes," said Ryerson, simply; "I should like to very much."

"At three, then," said the doctor, cheerfully, and bowed himself inside his gate.

At three, Ryerson stepped on the broad verandah of the Holden house with marvel at his own temerity in his heart, and a brain full of the chaos of the hundred and one questions he had tried to frame with which to suitably commence the conversation. Through the open door he heard the tapping of someone on the doctor's study door, the location of which many of the students knew well; and presently the doctor came down the hall-way to greet him himself.

"Come in," he said. "I think my study is the quietest place we can find. Violet can never see me in the arbour without wanting to join me." Violet was an eight-year-old daughter who thought that "papas" were chiefly intended to be played with.

Once in his study, this experienced diplomat at the court of youth soon had Ryerson at his ease and had learned what it was he wanted. "Yes,"

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he said reflectively, "I felt that difficulty myself when I was going through college. Thoughtful and conscientious undergraduates are especially subject to it. But it is impossible to silence the criticism of veneered ignorance by a reply of like kind. You may buttress your own soul against their attacks, but you can hardly cut off their supply of pop-guns. The raw material out of which they make them is too cheap," and the doctor smiled pleasantly at his neat way of putting it. "Have you had Paley's *Evidences* on your course yet?" he continued.

"Yes," said Ryerson, "but it does not seem to meet the case."

"No, it wouldn't," replied the doctor as if he had expected Ryerson's statement; "but it and later works of the same kind and purpose assure you of the strength of your position, and help you to disregard the pin-pricks of these cheap critics who really are useful in testing your faith."

"But," ventured Ryerson, "I think that if I could explain these contradictions in the Bible—and—and reconcile science with revelation, that I could bring these young men I speak of into the faith."

The doctor smiled pityingly. "These scientific objections," he said, "have really been answered so often that one requires Christian patience to meet them afresh every day. Often they are unimportant; others are exploded from time to time by new discoveries; true science is everywhere found

fighting on the side of the Bible, and yet there always are people who will reject the glorious truths of revelation because they never saw a whale they would care to take rooms in." And he laughed heartily at his daring witticism.

"Well, what about Jonah anyway?" asked Ryerson, covering his question with an answering laugh.

"Oh," said the doctor, becoming grave; "my own opinion is that the story of Jonah is a parable, teaching the folly of striving to escape the commands of God. There are other parables in the Scriptures. Christ himself preferred that vehicle for teaching the people. Then there is poetry in the Bible, too, which these half-baked infidels insist upon taking seriously and literally. But there is truth there, too, my son—the truth that maketh unto salvation."

To the sophisticated churchgoer and newspaper reader of this day, there would be nothing startling in Dr Holden's words. They might think him a little in danger of a church trial for heresy if he were too outspoken about his opinions; but they would have felt no such shock as fell upon this exceedingly inexperienced young man who knew no resting place between perfect faith and infidelity, to whom the whole Bible was "the Word of God," and who had thought that he must accept it all literally or none of it. His position was no doubt very absurd, and learned divines will smile at it;

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but what percentage of evangelical Christians at this moment think differently? In how many sermons, outside of the great cities, is the Bible treated on the poetry and parable theory?

Dr Holden's placid face, suggestive of nothing but the commonplace, steadied him, however, and he felt that it would be something like a display of rusticity to be surprised at the doctor's way of looking at the matter. Then did he not know that there were both parables and poetry in the Bible? What was he staring at? But there fell across his mind the memory of his mother explaining to him at length that the Bible said that the Lord had especially prepared a great fish to swallow up Jonah; and that if He could do this, He could certainly make this particular fish so that Jonah could live in it. It seemed keenly pathetic to him now that his mother should have so striven to read reality into a parable; but he dismissed the scene and pulled himself up to the doctor's superior position.

"Yes, yes," he said, making a pretence of thinking about it; "that could easily be so. Jonah would make a good parable. And Joshua's raid?" he asked, remembering one of Madden's fiercest assaults, and feeling that he was getting on. "What about that?"

"That's historic," replied the doctor, promptly. "There's no excuse for disbelieving that."

"No, I meant about the Lord telling him to put everybody to the sword," explained Ryerson.

"Oh," said the doctor with a trace of impatience, "we cannot judge the morals of one age by the standards of another. You must contrast the Jews of that day with the peoples about them to see the effect of divine guidance."

"But," Ryerson persisted, "God's standard of morals ought not to vary."

"God must work through human agents," retorted the doctor, sharply. "But I shouldn't bother about these quibbles if I were you," he went on more genially. "They lead to nothing. Matters we are troubled about now will all be revealed in God's good time. The great Christian doctrines are plain enough to you, aren't they?"

"Yes," said Ryerson.

"Well, lean upon them and go ahead. If we knew the whole of truth, we should be gods. I fear that you are in need of more spiritual guidance. Do you pray?"

"Yes, sir."

"All right"—heartily. "Now," getting up and going to the bookcase, "here is an admirable little volume dealing with some of the difficulties of a Christian life. Take it for vacation reading, and don't fritter away your time arguing with these pin-hole infidels. They are soiling their hands with the chaff that the Germans swept out of their workshops long ago. If they want to talk, compare lives with them; compare results with them. Put the church beside their miserable little clubs. They

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have done nothing but cavil all their lives. The church lifts the race, and they carp because—because"—looking for a simile—"because it stands on the earth to do it." And with that he shook hands with Ryerson and led him out through the wide hall to the vine-hidden verandah.

As Ryerson walked up the street, he felt that he had attained to a broader outlook on things. He believed himself better able to meet Madden, now that he was not tied down to the literal and specific defence of every passage in the Scripture. There was more room to play about in dialectically. It was the difference between rooting a pugilist to the ground and letting him dance about the ring. Then suddenly the thought pushed up into his mind that while he danced about, his mother must stand still and take all the blows. She believed the Bible to be absolutely true and entirely the work of God from Genesis to Revelation. From the impetus of not one statement in all its pages did she escape under cover of the notion that it was poetic or an unlabelled parable. "Don't you believe the Bible?" she would say as a clincher after having quoted a passage in support of some contention.

As he walked, these two conceptions of the Scriptures battled in his brain; and he presently found himself turning down to his own boarding house instead of going on to look up Madden as he had originally intended.

V

ON an afternoon in the following week, if Ryerson had been on calling terms with the Brownells, he might have found the Rev. Arthur Drake Walters—as he was known on the country circuits—seated at ease on the Brownell verandah, resting himself, after the tug of examinations, in the grateful society of Mrs Brownell and Grace. He had brought a volume of Cowper with him and had been reading them some poetry, and now he was telling of some college escapades in which he apologetically confessed to have played a prominent part. They were mostly practical jokes perpetrated at the expense of new or stupid students, in which the immense cleverness of the perpetrators was always apparent, though one sometimes wished they had chosen more difficult game. Mrs Brownell ejaculated at the adroitness of the plan, which was always laid to begin with; said “No, really!” at the miraculous stupidity of the victim; exclaimed in consternation at the climax, when the said victim seemed in danger of life, or, at least, cuticle; and cried, “My, what awful boys you college boys are!” when the tale was safely

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over. Grace, who was doing something with a crochet needle and thread, laughed when Walter's eyes were looking at her, and conducted some puzzled counting with pursed lips when they were not.

Then the talk turned to church matters, and Walters told of the benefit that the winter's revival had been to the college boys. Most of those who were converted had "persevered," and they had a fine Y. M. C. A. prayer meeting now every Friday night immediately after supper. The ladies were both soberly pleased at this, and Mrs Brownell told of some of the men and boys in the neighbourhood who had been much better behaved since the "meetings." Then she deprived herself of the pleasure of this young man's society—and it was undoubtedly a great pleasure to her who saw little of males with lively tongues and minds unharnessed to dollar-making—and went indoors to see about something or other indefinite. Grace came somewhat out of her preoccupation of needlework, and tossed the conversational ball with modest reserve back and forth with her visitor.

"You make a great many pretty things," he said politely, looking straight at her.

"Oh, I don't know," she replied, arching her neck and looking hard at her work.

"Oh, yes, you do," he insisted. "Your mother has shown me some of your work in the parlour."

Grace smiled deprecatingly.

"I shouldn't have the patience for it," he went on, turning his eyes out toward the street. "I have so much reading to do anyway that I have no time for much else."

"Papa and I do a good deal of reading too," said Grace with a touch of pride in her tone, both at the fact and the partnership with her father.

"What do you read?" asked Walters with an amused smile.

"Oh, different things," said Grace, largely. "Dickens and *The Little Minister* and—"

Walters's laugh stopped her. "I can't waste my time on fiction," he interjected. "There's too much serious reading to be done. Then I believe it weakens the mind," he added, as an afterthought.

"We don't always read fiction," said Grace, a little stiffly. "Now we have just finished reading Dr Livingstone's African travels."

"Yes," said Walters, tolerantly; "that's very good, but you ought to try some philosophy if you want to know what reading is. Why, one book I read this year I had to go over many of the sentences three or four times to get any idea of their meaning."

"My!" said Grace, visibly impressed.

"The theology course," he went on, "is very heavy. The works we much read are so abstruse and — and — transcendental. None of the other

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courses are like it. Now, if you are preparing to study law, for instance, what do you have? A little history, some Roman law, constitutional history, and that sort of thing—all straight reading. You could get it up fairly well without lectures. But theology and philosophy are different altogether."

"I am sure it must be very hard," said Grace; "but I would find law hard too." Ryerson Embury was supposed to be preparing for the law.

"Why don't you go away to college where they admit ladies and take a course yourself?" Walters asked with the air of one who would encourage a *protégé* to great deeds. "I think you could get through one all right."

"I'm certain I could," replied Grace, calmly; "and I mean to take a course some day."

"Will your papa let you?"

"I hope so; but if he don't, I can teach and get enough money to put myself through."

Walters laughed in enjoyment of her adorable little air of independence; and then said teasingly,—

"You'll get married first."

A little colour showed in her cheeks. "No," she said decidedly, "I won't. You think girls can do nothing but marry, but you are mistaken."

"Most of them do," he pointed out.

"Well," she said defiantly, shaking her head, "you'll see. I like to study and I—I want to know things. I will go in especially for the

languages," she added in a tone of charming importance.

"Yes," he commended largely; "you'll not find 'moderns' very hard; but you ought to tackle Hebrew, as we poor 'theologues' have to. That would bother you more than tangled fancy work." She shifted a little in her chair, as if minded to protest, but said nothing.

"Hebrew requires very careful study," he went on; "Henders was telling me a story about old Dr Chalmers the other day that illustrates this. Dr Chalmers, you know, can drink tea in Hebrew—"

She looked up and laughed brightly at the fancy.

"—Knows the language thoroughly. Well, one night some years ago—but first I must explain to you that in Hebrew every little mark means an awful lot. The meaning of an entire sentence will be wholly changed by a little dot or a stroke in the wrong place. That is what it means when it speaks in the Bible about one jot or one tittle"—a suggestion of his pulpit style was noticeable—"they were small Hebrew characters, the loss of which might have a great effect on the meaning of the passage."

"Yes, I know," said Grace, a trifle impatiently.

"Well," and he smiled in anticipation of his story, "one night long ago, Dr Chalmers sat up reading an old Hebrew copy of the Old Testament, when suddenly he noticed that a

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familiar passage had an entirely new meaning. He read it over again, but there was no mistake. There it was in black and white"—and Walters gave a short snigger in enjoyment of the denouement which Grace was yet to hear. "So he worked over the passage for a long time, got out all his dictionaries and authorities, but he could not change it. Finally the morning sun found him still at work and—eh—still perplexed. So he carried the volume to Dr Holden who knew something of Hebrew, and got him up out of bed to see the new discovery. And what do you suppose it was?"

"How would I know?" asked Grace in return.

"It was nothing but a fly-speck," chuckled out Walters; "and that shows how much difference a little dot can make in Hebrew."

"O-o-o-h!" cried Grace, balancing between amusement and sympathy. "Poor old Dr Chalmers, with his poor old eyes. I think it was a shame for Dr Holden to tell."

But Walters was still laughing at the joke and he only said, "How could he help it?" and then, after he had laughed himself out, "Hebrew is a great language."

Then he told her more about the great difficulty of his college course; and how he felt when preaching; and finally dropped into talking of the girls whom he met on his circuits. Grace was quite curious on this latter score, and chided him flatter-

ingly for the conduct set forth in his tales of bread-and-milk gallantry. Presently she called him "a terrible flirt," at which his eyes danced, though he protested with his tongue. She insisted, however, on the accuracy of her description, and added, moreover, her conviction that all young preachers were "flirts."

At this he became grave and confidential. He said that it was simply ridiculous the way that country girls acted toward young ministers. And he gave instances in point.

"But," said Grace, "you know better, and you should teach them better."

"I guess there are few young men who would not take more advantage of their chances than I have," he protested. "Then it don't hurt them to flirt a little," he went on with a half laugh. "It brightens them up and they will know better after a while. They are not really nice girls, you know, like—like you are," and he twisted his chair about and carelessly threw his arm around her shoulders.

She rose instantly, holding her matted fancy work from falling with both hands; and with a faint smile on her lips said in a constrained voice, "Would you like to play a game of tennis, Mr Walters?"

He got up too with, "You are not angry with me, are you, Grace?"

She looked at him a moment, and then said in even tones, "I shouldn't like you to tell all over

the circuits you visit that you—you—well, that you called me 'Grace.'"

"I beg your pardon," he said quickly. "It was all only an accident—"

"Or a habit," she put in, flashing a smile at him; and then, putting down her fancy work, she led the way to the tennis court.

VI

THE days when the fagged collegians lay under the young summer sun, and waited for the results of the examinations, were idyllic. The utter impossibility of doing anything now that could change the result by a fraction of a per cent., entirely reconciled the conscience to unbroken idleness; and the passionate industry and the close application of the past month, clothed rest and liberty with that supreme charm which is usually the property only of some incredible good fortune. Be-pencilled text-books, the imperious taskmasters of yesterday, could now be flouted on their shelves; one might go to the wood of a morning with a novel or with nothing in his hands; every day was a lengthened Saturday afternoon; a "walk" was no longer a medical necessity to be hurried back from; and through it all ran an intermittent curiosity as to who had led, who had passed, who were plucked, and what one had done one's self. It was an unavoidable becalming of the vessel when there was nothing to do but wait for the last breeze--and the harbour.

There was football on the "campus" at irre-

gular hours in which the men joined listlessly, for no necessity was felt now to pack much play into few minutes. There were walking tours, and all-day boating trips down the river. One day a party was made up of Gault and Madden and Paterson and "Shorty" Batters and Ryerson and two or three more college men to go down the river immediately after dinner and fish for bass. They had three boats between them, and floated down stream under the early afternoon sun with a minimum of exertion. "Shorty" Batters occasionally sang a line or two of something suggestive of a rolling gait, wagging his head the while and trailing his fingers on both sides of the boat through the water. Madden pulled his hat over his eyes and dozed; while Gault and Ryerson and a couple of the others kept up a desultory discussion on the several papers lately submitted to them, and the chances of the best men in the different classes.

"Billings told me," said Gault, "that Hughson told him that you had made the best figures in years in third-year geology, Ryerson."

"I don't believe that Hughson would tell Billings, even if he had got the returns from Dr Bertram yet," Ryerson objected with the unbigoted air of a man who would like to have his objection set aside.

"I don't know," replied Gault, not sticking to his guns as staunchly as Ryerson had hoped. "But

that's what Billings said. I hope it's true anyway. I'd like you to get the 'Greenleaf'—a prize offered for the best papers in third-year science.

"M'Kim is pretty sure of it, I'm afraid," sighed Ryerson; "he worked much harder than I did all year."

"Say! I saw Parson Walters yesterday," broke in Batters, "and he expects to lead his year."

"No!" said Paterson, more as a note of amusement than as a negative.

"He was quite serious about it," Batters assured him; "said that Charlie Sampson would disappoint his friends when the returns came in."

"He will," commented Paterson. "He will disappoint Friend Walters."

"You should stand by the cloth better, Paterson," said Madden, chidingly, pushing his hat back and taking an interest in things.

"There are 'shysters' in other businesses beside the law, you junior Blackstone plus Ingersoll," returned the deliberate divinity student.

"They say that Walters has got a 'cinch' on old Brownell's daughter," put in a classmate of Ryerson's, possessed of a square jaw, pompadour hair and Van Loom as a family name. "And it's the way he oozes piety that gets him in there."

Ryerson felt uncomfortably conscious, though he knew that few if any of the fellows present would have thought of connecting his name with that of Grace Brownell. She was too carefully kept by a

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watchful mother for much student flirtation to come near her where the public eye could take note of it. The boys who went to Sunday school were the only ones who would have been certain to turn to him at the mention of her name, and most of them were in the junior classes. A third-year man was a survival at the Sunday school, and Ryerson had felt an indefinite shame at being there all through the last year. But it was his one safe chance to see Grace; for happily "mamma" preferred an hour's shaded meditation in her own room on a Sabbath afternoon.

"That's what's the matter with Paterson," went on Madden in answer to Van Loom's remark. "He's jealous—not of the girl, but of Walter's perspiring piety."

"You're a fool, Madden," Paterson observed calmly.

"Possibly," Madden admitted; "but you're not a Simon-pure, come-to-glory Christian if you don't believe in Walters's kind of religion."

"I may agree with his religion without admiring his methods of preaching it, mayn't I?" Paterson queried.

"I don't know," returned Madden. "There are preachers who insist that you must believe in their emotions as a part of their religion, and Walters's methods are not far from his emotions."

Later in the day, when they had all tired of fishing where there were no fish to speak of, and were

sitting on the shady bank of the river amidst the crumpled papers and scattered chicken bones and the usual wreckage of a lunch, Paterson took Madden lazily to task for bothering an old man who did some writing in his office with "cheap and nasty" objections to Holy Writ. "You know perfectly well," he said, "that the modern Christian scholar does not believe that Moses wrote the account of his own death, or that there is any kind of inspiration which the discovery of a few contradictions would wreck, or any other absurd thing of that order. Yet it was that sort of talk you bothered old Mathews with."

Madden defended himself on the ground that Mathews, at all events, believed these things, and that it was a duty to dispel ignorance wherever you found it. "And as you grant that these things are not true, you should praise me for setting Mathews right on the subject," he added with a grin.

"Ah! but you took advantage of the influence gained over his mind by knocking down these straw men to teach him that there was nothing divine about the Bible at all," said Paterson.

"Well, neither there is," returned Madden, aggressively. "What's the use of talking nonsense! If the Bible contains bad geography, bad history, bad science, self-contradictions and, what is worse, bad morals, do you think that God would bind up a divine revelation with such a mess and impose it

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upon his people as a Holy Book? More than that, your contention is that he has made belief in these doctrines, thus wrapped up in things impossible to believe, a *sine qua non* of salvation. Then you talk of 'straw men.' They are flesh and blood enough to the majority of church people."

"What an old bell-mouthed blunderbuss you are, Madden," Paterson observed calmly. "You know perfectly well that all those showy shots of yours about bad history, contradictions and the like, do not hit the position occupied by Christian scholarship at all."

"Well, if it comes to that, why not?" Madden inquired argumentatively. "Don't Christianship accept the Bible as a divine revelation?"

"I had rather say that it holds that the Bible contains a divine revelation."

"On—ho!" Madden chortled. "How do you profess to know the divine from the human parts then?"

"I shall answer your question by asking another," Paterson returned. "How do you know truth anywhere?"

"By the reason," Madden shot out triumphantly.

"Exactly," said Paterson, leaning slightly forward, but without any change in his habitually calm and confident manner. "Reason, led by the Holy Spirit, is our guide."

Madden looked baffled for a moment, and then diverted his attack toward another point.

"Then you admit that some parts of the Bible are untrue?" he queried.

"The purely human sections are, of course, subject to human frailties."

"Now don't dodge! Do you think that any of the Bible history, for instance, is untrue?"

"I suspect," said Paterson with the smoothness suggestive of force that is seen when a current runs swiftly, but without breaking, over a stone, "that the Scribes may have tampered with Old Testament chronology a bit, but I cannot see that it matters. As long as God's dealings with the Jews' are clear, the purpose of the revelation is accomplished."

And so the unending debate went on. Ryerson joined in presently by attacking Madden for the unproductivity of "free thought" in the line of "good works." This was Dr Holden's suggested plan of campaign; but the doctor had not told him what to say when Madden argued that civilisation had advanced in spite of the church—that, for instance, "Christianity owed more to the Germanic peoples than the Germanic peoples did to Christianity." Of Paterson, Ryerson was more in awe, though he felt that his own people at home would regard his line of defence as little better than a surrender to the enemy. The debate had a sequel, however, in a militant visit from Madden the following evening, when he talked the lad into a condition of bewilderment and, in the parlance of

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such discussions, "shut him up entirely." Ryerson felt the unfairness of many of his arguments, felt that he (Madden) was constantly the not too scrupulous advocate and seldom the truth-seeker; but he was verbally pounded into a state of speechlessness. Of course, Madden saw the book that Dr Holden had given Ryerson for "vacation reading," and at once offered him antidotes by the armful. Ryerson said he would take two or three, because his pride as a "fearless truth-seeker" would not let him refuse; but he felt no taste for writing which should handle roughly the beliefs which had been numbered among the immutable things with him until a little ago, and were yet sacred. When the books came—Tom Paine, Strauss and Ingersoll—he had a physical repulsion toward them. He took care not to pack them anywhere near his Bible or his mother's picture, and then heaped exaggerated ridicule on himself for his childish scruples. Was he not a man, seeking the truth at all costs? Why should he be ashamed to read both sides? Did he think that true religion had anything to fear from the fullest research? Was not his father's favourite motto, "Be sure you are right and then go ahead?" Was not, in short, his home teaching to search out things for himself? Why, of course. There could be no doubt about the propriety of taking these books home. He—but so tricky a thing is the mind that, before he was aware of it, he caught himself wondering, in

the midst of all this heroic mental slapping of his thrust-out chest, where he could hide the books when he got home, so that neither father nor mother would suspect their presence. Then he blushed to the brow and went furiously on with his packing.

Friday saw the lists up. Ryerson had the "Greenleaf" and led his class. It was the first time in his course, and he felt an insane desire to jump right up and down. Then he wrote a postal card home about it, and turned out into the streets to find himself famous. Boys gathered about him on the "campus," and asked him how he did it—how many hours he studied, whether he reviewed with notes or the text-books, if he took an egg-nog in the mornings before going into the examination hall, whether he ran over the papers and answered the questions he was sure of first or just ploughed down the list. Professors stopped him on the street to extend a congratulatory hand. But the climax came when the cautious Mrs Brownell asked him to come over for an afternoon's tennis and stay to tea. He forgot theology, and revelled in the perfumed incense of success. Walters had not led the graduating class by a long way, and Mrs Brownell liked to see promising young men talking to Grace. Convocation came and he trod the elastic path to the dais three times amid the plaudits of his friends—once for his "honours," once for the "Greenleaf" and

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once for the "Proficiency." Grace sat in the gallery, in some kind of a light dress and a wide summery hat, and beamed down on him. That night he sat again on her verandah in the flower-scented air of a happy June, and talked hopefully of his future in which they both tacitly assumed she was interested.

The last thing at the gate he said,—

"Well, I suppose I shall not see you again until autumn."

"No."

"I wonder—do you think you could give me that rose you are wearing, until then?"

"Will you give it back then?"

"Yes; sure."

"You'll lose it."

"No, no. Here, put it in my buttonhole for the present."

And she came close to him in the deep shadow of the vine that embowered the gate and lifted her hands to fasten the flower as he had asked. Her eyes shone like stars, and her breath played on his neck and chin.

"I wonder," and his voice was unsteady, "if you would do me a greater favour."

"What?" and her tone was low and she looked with a new shyness at him.

"This," was the reply, and he kissed her for the first time on the mouth.

"Oh," she said, but her lips neither smiled nor

compressed in anger. In a moment she stepped back into the light and said in a voice laden with gentleness, "Good-bye ; and—and I shall look for a call when vacation is over."

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VII

WHEN Ryerson stepped off the train next day at Fordville—the unprogressive little village that had been his home from childhood—both his father and mother were on the station platform to meet him. He did not know, until his mother mentioned it quite casually that evening, that they had been there for two hours, having come down to meet an earlier train on the chance that he might try to surprise them by taking it, although he had written that he would come by the “express.” This early “move to the front” was his father’s idea. He would let no “youngster” from college get ahead of him. His mother had thought of it and then discarded it, deciding, with a finer tact, that if Ryerson wanted to surprise them it would be too bad to disappoint him.

When he was not on the first train, the expectant couple, who had learned to wrap their love well round with patience during the long years through which they had “raised” this only child of their own great love, simply sat down on the whittled and knife-lettered wooden bench which stood against the shady side of the station-house and

waited through the two hours that swam with loving anticipation. They said little to each other though their eyes met frequently, and furtive smiles played with the corners of their mouths as wantonly as sungleams light the air on an April day.

Embury the elder—Ryerson's father—was a man of slight stature and spare form, with a face that was full of kindness though the indecisive eyes suggested an incapacity that damns a man—particularly with the successful. As a matter of fact, he had not been very successful. A public-school teacher all his life, he had only attained to the head-mastership of his school by dint of long service and patient waiting. In his schoolroom he had the appearance of a man wearing a character several times too large for him. He tried to be impressive, and succeeded fairly well; but a great crisis or a determined revolt against his authority would bring his pretentious, plaster-of-Paris mastership down with a crash.

But to his wife he was always a god with a kindly manner; and her great grievance against the world was its inexcusable failure to appreciate her husband. She, on her part, was a gentle soul, with something of awe for her husband's wide erudition—and it was undoubtedly much superior to that of many of the men who pushed themselves by him in the scramble of life. Did not the village doctor always refer to him as "the most learned

man in the county, sir!" and were not his letters in the chief paper of the county town on the relation of Old Testament teaching to Greek thought, read and praised by all the preachers of the district, to say nothing of Dr Holden of Ithica who wrote Mr Embury a congratulatory note on the subject? Mrs Embury had more worldly wisdom than her husband, however; and it was their economy that bought their charming little cottage-home for them and saved the money which was now sending Ryerson to college.

And now that Ryerson was on the second half of that college course, how full of ambition they both were for him! There was nothing he might not do. The lad had high hopes for himself, but they were limping and broken-winged when compared to theirs. The "card" that told of his medal and his "Greenleaf" had cut the last cord that bound the wings of their ambition for him; and they revelled in the thought of what the village would say when he had grown great. His mother, in her heart of hearts, would have preferred that he should be a great preacher, but she was willing to confer him on the law, seeing that he desired it; reminding herself that lawyers can do a vast amount of good, and that he might then the more easily become a Gladstone-like premier, ruling the nation on Christian principles. His father was less positive in his vicarious ambition. Success was the great thing. Ryerson must never know

the agony of being passed on the path by a better-equipped but really less worthy man.

That long summer vacation at Fordville was to Ryerson a period of alternating mental stagnation and mental turmoil. When his father's holidays came, they all took an inexpensive two-weeks' outing at a lake resort not far away; but for the rest of the time he seemed to live between the tremulous quiet of the village street under the blazing noon-day, the cool fresh quiet of a wood near by, the yet cooler quiet of the closed parlour at home where he liked best to read, and the noisy, gossiping companionship of the idle village at night. Amid such surroundings, thought was merciless. He must face every problem until he had solved it—there was not a distraction to ride away upon. He did some studying for next year, and began the books that Madden had lent him. He would see what was in them. He would, indeed, have to be prepared with replies to them when he met Madden in the fall. Then he had Dr Holden's book, which he turned to with hope; but unhappily it appeared to take for granted, or else to teach simply on authority, the things which the Madden squadron attacked. But still he kept up a pretty stiff defence against Paine and Ingersoll so long as he could maintain the attitude of his friend Paterson. What did these cheap jibes prove after all? The Gospel was still intact.

But the moment he entered the atmosphere of

Fordville, the Paterson buckler fell to the ground. "Doesn't the Bible say so?" was there the all-sufficient proof of any statement. On Sundays the minister quoted from "the Word of God"; and he made no distinction between Jonah and Jesus. They had the minister in to tea one night and the conversation turned upon the "higher criticism." It was a chorus of condemnation. It was as bad, they said, to disbelieve one part of the Bible as to disbelieve it all. What human hand could venture to divide the true from the false in Holy Writ? Ryerson protested that notice had to be taken of later discoveries, and that the arguments of the infidel had to be met.

"Take care, my son," said the minister, "you are drinking at a dangerous spring. College life is full of snares and pitfalls. Stick to the good old faith of your fathers."

Ryerson reddened and denied that what he had said involved any abandonment of faith. He was going on to argue the case but the pain in his mother's eyes and the disapproval and astonishment in his father's face stopped him. Then the three agreed that the so-called "higher critics" were doing more harm than outspoken infidels whom one could always beware of; and Ryerson's father said that he thought that if a man had any doubts about the Bible or religion he ought to keep them to himself and not disturb the faith of others.

Consequently the lad fought this battle against the infidel writers with his hands tied. He must save his mother's religion, or nothing. Then hers was the religion that had life in it. It was the religion of the revival. It was the religion of practically the whole Church—even Dr Holden himself called the Bible "the Word of God" when in the pulpit without once mentioning the differences in authority between the various parts of the book.

Then the battle was single-handed. He was a beardless boy fencing with giants. The very love of his parents for him forbade him to let them know that he was in need of aid. Then what could they do for him? They had both accepted their faith as they had the climate into which they were born. The minister had a showy armory of arguments, but authority was constantly called in to supplement reason. So the lad fought alone. There was no one to look over his shoulder and point out the special pleader's trick with which this man "scored" or that man made a feint at toppling over an ancient belief. Above all, there was no one to point beyond the tragedy of Calvary to the dynamic, oppression-rending, caste-levelling teaching on the Mount and in the Temple that led up to it. For another thing, the lad was only a lad and knew nothing yet of the world's sorrow—of the misery of the many because of the inhumanity of the strong. How could he then see the record of the never-ending struggle of

the hero-knight against the black dragon of injustice which appears in many a Scripture from the story of Moses, the Liberator, to the thunders of John, the Pamphleteer, against Nero?

So he fought his fight alone—and lost.

VIII

ONE windy, sunshiny day in the following March—a six months after Ryerson's summer of religious controversy within himself—when minute pools of water shone and rippled on the icy road-bed of the streets and hummocks of drenched grass showed through the snow in the fields, Dr Holden plashed and pushed his way along to make an afternoon call on Mrs Brownell. The visit was of a semi-pastoral nature, for the worthy professorial doctor had been a minister in active work in his day, and looked upon several congenial homes in Ithica as constituting in some sense an unexacting and wholly voluntary pastoral charge for him yet. At all events, he liked to make afternoon calls at these houses, and to chat with the decorously-gowned ladies over the light humours and mild tragedies of the neighbourhood, and to hear occasionally, as a sort of Protestant "father confessor," the silken story of their perplexities and problems and trials.

On this afternoon Mrs Brownell was at home and was sitting in an alcove of the drawing-room with Grace and Mrs Masterson, the wife of the leading manufacturer of the town.

"Ah! Good afternoon, doctor. It is very brave

of you to venture out on such a day," she said when he was ushered in.

The doctor made his greetings all round, pinching Grace's cheek, when it came her turn, with a comment on its plumpness. Then he asked after the well-being of the masculine attachments of the ladies, and remarked that he had been told that Mr Masterson intended building another conservatory this year.

"Yes, William thinks of doing so," said Mrs Masterson, "if the men at the 'works' do not disarrange all his plans for him."

"How so?" asked Dr Holden.

"Oh, in these days," returned Mrs Masterson, "one cannot venture to have a plan without consulting one's servants. The houses are ruled from the kitchen and the 'works' from the boiler-room."

"Any trouble at the 'works'?" asked the doctor, seeking the point.

"Not yet," said Mrs Masterson, "but the men are talking 'strike'."

"Why?"

"Because they are too well off," and Mrs Masterson's eyes glinted in a manner suggestive of her husband's best steel. "They are getting full of high and mighty notions. Many of their wives dress better than I do, and none of the girls are content until they get a piano. And now they have reached such a pitch that none of them will work at all unless they get certain wages."

"You wouldn't expect them to work for uncertain wages, would you?" put in Grace, who was still at that age when a chance to make a bad pun is an irresistible temptation.

Mrs Masterson smiled indulgently at her and went on. "It's worse even than that, doctor. They won't let anyone else work now who doesn't get as good wages as the best—at least, of his own grade. Now there's poor Sam Wilson. You know him, doctor?"

The doctor nodded.

"Well, William wanted to give him a little work last month. His family hardly had a bite to eat and he was behind in his rent. So William wanted to let him earn what he could at the 'works.' He called in his foreman and told him about it. And do you think the foreman would let him? Not for a minute. He said that if Sam would join their Union they'd let him come in and work at Union wages for a man of his grade. Of course, poor Sam would have been willing to work for anything, but they'd rather see him starve."

"I thought Sam was a Union man," said the doctor.

"He is now," said Mrs Masterson. "They frightened him into it, but William soon taught him that that was not the way to get into his works, and so the Union men have had the pleasure of keeping him ever since," and she smiled as if she were a style ahead of her next pew neighbour in a church hat.

"But what is the strike likely to be about?" asked Dr Holden.

"In a word," said Mrs Masterson, emphatically, "William says he's going to find out who owns his own factory—himself or the men."

"Oh!" said the doctor, comprehendingly, settling back; and then he added—"labour troubles are getting to be the greatest curse of this country."

"Well, but, Mrs Masterson," put in Grace, "surely everybody knows that Mr Masterson owns the foundry."

"The men pretend they don't," Mrs Masterson replied with a sniff. "You would be astonished, my child, at the things they claim the right to do if you only knew them. Why, they won't let Mr Masterson say how much wages he will pay any of his men; they must settle that themselves. He can't go into his foundry and tell any man to do what he wants him to as your mother can with her servants. Not a bit of it. The Union fixes all that—just what each is to do, and what he is to get for it."

"Why, but Mr Masterson needn't give it to them if he doesn't want to," Grace said wonderingly.

"If he don't, they will strike and go out and march and keep others from working, and close the foundry and try to burn it down as like as not," Mrs Masterson proceeded with vehemence.

"Why, that's not right," Grace adjudged. "That is against the law, isn't it?"

"That's what Mr Masterson is thinking of trying to find out," returned Mrs Masterson, with a shake of the head.

"My! I never heard of such a thing," was Grace's comment on this, her first look into the "labour problem."

Then the doctor asked Mrs Brownell how her palm was getting on, turning the conversation into less heating channels. Presently Mrs Huntington and her daughter, Miss Bertha, came in, radiating an atmosphere of vivacious good-humour with one's self after their tussle with the March wind. They were merry over finding Dr Holden making an afternoon call; and Miss Bertha, who had a masculine stride, and rode cross-country when she could get companions, and carried her taste for rough-riding into her conversation, chirruped,—

"You do belong to the third sex, don't you, doctor? You should have a 'day' and brew tea for your lady friends, male and female."

The doctor flushed a little, regarded Miss Bertha for a moment, and then brought his gentle soul to retort,—

"So far, very few of my lady friends are—eh—of masculine texture."

"Oh!" said Miss Bertha—she was thirty-three, publicly unengaged, and wore a 'gent's' collar and tie—"you mean that for me. Well, I will spare you this time; for—to tell the truth—I can think of nothing at the moment to reply."

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Mrs Huntington had been gushing along meantime to the two ladies about some lovely things she had seen at "Benson's"—the leading dry-goods store in Ithica—but still, it seemed, she could not suit herself because this was too dark, and Mrs So-and-so had already ordered a dress of that, while another "just too lovely thing" was altogether too expensive. Then, out of pity for the helpless man present, they noisily agreed to talk of something he could understand, and hit upon the weather as fairly within his comprehension. At that, he managed to lead the talk to the popular lectures that the college professors had been giving during the winter at the Mechanics' Institute, but this reminded Mrs Huntington so vividly of a report that young Professor Mackenzie was going to marry "that Morris girl," that she could not help whispering the news in an aside to Mrs Brownell, which led Miss Bertha to remark that "Sally Morris would certainly get young Mackenzie if burning incense to a man in public was to be rewarded in this life." The doctor smiled a trifle wanly, and made an adroit effort to catch the elusive tail of the conversation by beginning to talk of the other young men at college, growing jocose over their interest in the young ladies of Ithica. He seemed to think this in some way a compliment to Miss Bertha, but she sturdily refused all such undeserved sweetmeat. It may be remarked in passing that she

always sat a chair as she did a horse, and plainly had difficulty in refraining from whipping up her dress skirt.

Had anyone been watching Grace during this conversation, they would have noticed that through most of it she appeared to be divided between boredom and an amused half-interest. But when Dr Holden turned the chat to the young collegians, she became at once apprehensive as if fearing a wound—not showing the shyness of a young girl, the name of whose sweetheart is likely to be mentioned, but rather the nervousness of a woman whose family skeleton you are in danger of rattling inadvertently. Then she made an effort—visible because of her inexperience—to control herself. She would appear as if she had exactly the same interest in the conversation as before—not a particle more. But she had the foresight to take a book off the table to give her hands employment.

“By the way, doctor, you have an infidel club up at your godly college now, haven’t you?” It was the incisive voice of Miss Bertha.

Grace opened the book, read the inscription to her mother from “a sea-side friend” quite carefully, as if it were new to her, and then quickly closed it as if she had found what she had wanted so suddenly.

“Well, hardly that,” the doctor was replying doubtfully, and with the air of one attacked on an unpleasant subject. “Rationalism is always

epidemic with undergraduates at a certain stage, you know," he added, smiling.

"But I'm told," insisted Miss Bertha, "that Mr Embury made a speech the other night at the 'Free Thought Club'—a most uncompromising speech."

Grace's fingers tightened on the book convulsively, and her eyes looked at the gossiping group with an almost audible plea for mercy in them. Mrs Brownell's lips had become compressed, and she looked at her daughter as one who invites attention to what is being said.

"No. You must be mistaken," said Dr Holden, in a shocked voice. "Embury is unquestionably the ringleader, but I don't think he has gone into the town 'Free Thought Club' yet."

"I am afraid that Miss Huntington is right," said Mrs Masterson, in the tone of one who makes it a duty to always expect the worst. "Mrs Gault told me that she forbade Herbert to have anything more to do with young Embury, and they used to be quite thick."

"That was an excellent way to make Herbert go with him or die," commented Miss Bertha.

"I think it is terribly too bad," said Mrs Brownell, with a sigh. "He was so clever a young man. But"—and her eyes passed over Grace's face as if by accident—"Christian people must teach these young men that when they choose a life of revolt against religion they must take the consequences."

The book slipped from Grace's lap to the floor.

"Can't you discipline them at college?" Mrs Masterson inquired of Dr Holden.

"No, we have no religious test," he said; "and then wouldn't that be making the affair a matter of too great importance?"

"I hardly think that is possible," was Mrs Brownell's verdict.

"Ah! Grace, dear," exploded Miss Bertha, suddenly catching sight of Grace's tell-tale face, "didn't I hear that Mr Embury was—ah—well—an admirer of yours?" and she smiled at her roguishly.

"We are friends yet," returned Grace, with a quick flush.

"What! With an awful, dreadful, blasphemous infidel?"

"Oh, I don't know that he is so awful," returned Grace, more loyal than effective in reply.

"Of course he has ceased to call here," Mrs Brownell observed, patently taking no notice of the dialogue with Grace.

Miss Bertha, still to Grace, "Perhaps you are thinking of trying to convert him?"

Grace stooped for her book, an operation which appeared to impart to her eyes the least bit of a glitter. Then she replied to the kittenishly expectant Miss Bertha, laying the book as she did so on the table with a steady hand, "I am afraid I don't know how. Any effort I would make might

be misunderstood; we are so near of an age. Some one old enough to be beyond any — any gossip should try it. You—eh—” But she was not accustomed yet to the use of the social bludgeon, and her young hand faltered at the moment of the blow. She looked away quickly from Miss Bertha’s astonished face, and Miss Bertha herself fell to looking out of the window, until Dr Holden shifted the conversation by asking if any of the ladies had heard of the escapade over at Miss Taylor’s “refined Academy for selected young ladies.”

None of them had; and so the doctor, smiling a bit and sure of attention at last, told how the night before last, according to his informant, who was there “quite by accident, of course” — the doctor’s own smile broadened at this—seven young ladies, who were drinking in decorum and refinement at the extra-polite spring presided over by the eminently proper Miss Taylor, got out of the Academy at the shocking hour of 10.30 p.m., through a ground-floor window (“How dreadful!” from Mrs Brownell, and “No risk in that” from Miss Bertha), and met four or five young men on the street just about the corner, walked as much as half a block with them, accompanied by much giggling, took fright at the approach of a female figure which they were sure was that of Miss Primrose, one of the lady teachers, and rushed back to the Academy in a panic where they made

so much fuss climbing in at the window again that Miss Taylor woke up, and, locking out of her window after a discreet delay, caught the last of them just disappearing over the sill.

"And who was she?" asked Grace, her eyes dancing. "I am sure it was Eva Mulhall, she's so slow."

"No," said the doctor, still enjoying the episode as adipose tissue always does the friskings of young blood. "It was what they call a 'weekly pupil,' I believe, a Miss Fitzgerald from—from some place or other near here. Goes home, you know, every Friday night."

"I know her," said Miss Bertha, promptly. "A dashing sort of girl—the daughter of a little inn-keeper on the Glen Ewart Road—a bad piece of girl flesh to get men past."

"It was too bad she wasn't just a little bit quicker," sighed Grace.

"Yes," assented the doctor, "but it was not her tardiness but her courage that caused her undoing. She wouldn't run from the bogus Miss Primrose, but sauntered on in a spirit of bravado to meet her with this same Embury we were talking of. That's what reminded me of the story."

Grace's face went scarlet, and Miss Bertha turned a pair of amused eyes on her, rocking her foot meanwhile as if it were in a stirrup.

IX

MRS BROWNELL called her housemaid "Suzette"; but "Suzette's" diminutive brother, Jamesy, contented himself with Susan. But then Jamesy did not read polite literature and had never visited friends in New York in his life. Still, Jamesy had his sphere of usefulness, and when he sauntered in that evening by the wide entrance through which the Brownell drive-way swept from the street up to the coach-house, and then strolled on around to the rear of the house, where he rapped on a door and inquired, in a low voice and bashful air that "th' fellys" would never have recognised, if "Susan Smithers" were in, Jamesy was supplementing an inefficient postal service. The experts who run Her Majesty's postal department for Canada probably imagine that they meet the demands of the public fairly well, but this is only because the said experts have never had occasion to deliver a letter to one member of a household—the said member being a minor—without the knowledge of any other member of the said household. If any of these

learned men ever should have such an experience, they would realise how absolutely inefficient and stupid their precious system is when it is called upon to deal with matters of real importance. Anyone can receive, transmit and deliver a business letter or a card of invitation, but it requires a diplomatic genius and a knowledge of the "lay of the land," supplemented by a "pull," to convey a missive from a young man to a young maid when the guardians of the front door are adverse to the enterprise.

Now Jamesy had all these rare qualifications in an eminent degree, and they were stimulated to special activity in the present case by his unbounded admiration for Ryerson Embury as the "dandiest football player at de collidge." And, moreover, he squeezed a ten-cent piece of Ryerson's between his thumb and finger in the furthestmost depths of his trouser's pocket.

The result of it all was that Suzette had business in Grace's room that night just after that young lady had brought up a well-filled lamp, a smuggled box of chocolates and Mr Crockett's *Lilac Sunbonnet*, with which to woo by no means—in her case—coy slumber. And when she had gone out, Grace tore open a diminutive envelope, settled herself on the floor, with an arm on the chair that held the lamp, and read with eagerness, but with a touch of indignant colour in her cheeks, the following note:—

"AT MY STUDY WINDOW.

"DEAR GRACE,—What a persistent little preacher you are! I can see your gloved forefinger shaken at me through every sentence of your last letter. Why don't you give me up? I am afraid that I am a hard case. I don't mean, of course, for you to give me up in any way but the religious. But I think that if anything could save a man it would be such a girl as you; you almost make one believe in all—but there, I won't say anything more about it.

"I am writing this to ask a great favour of you. You have no idea how lonely it is since your mother came to the conclusion that I was too bad to continue those delightful Friday evening visits." ("Lonely," sniffed Grace to herself; "except on nights when that Fitzgerald girl can dodge out of the Academy.") "They were the one kindly touch on my life. Down here at my rooms it is all tired-looking notebooks, ink-splotches, eye-wearying text-books, and the shadow of coming 'exams.' Out with the boys, it is jollity and rivalry and fierce discussion, but nowhere the touch of a woman's hand."

(Grace's lips came together but she said nothing. It was in her thoughts that "the touch of a woman's hand" could hardly have been lacking at that night escapade outside Miss Taylor's Academy.)

"But those deliciously quiet evenings with you, Grace" (the letter went on), "when we sat in the light of the great, red-shaded lamp and talked of books that were merry, and better books still that told the 'sweet dream' most mortals dream some day, when you let me read Moore to you and Tennyson, and then you told me your serious plans for the future, which implied years of living alone and working for fame, and I laughed at you. They were nights to be marked, as Du Maurier says, 'with a white stone.'

"Now I am hungry to see you again, if only for a moment. I have about made up my mind to go into Webster, Saunders & Webster's office here in the autumn and I want to talk it over with you. Then I've lots and lots of other things to say—and hear. Won't you meet me some evening soon by the maple at the corner of Masterson street? It will be perfectly safe, I think. Or you might walk down to the post-office about four on Friday, when I will meet you 'by accident' and take you up to Clara's—that's a good way off.

"Send me a note by Jamesy, and do be good to me.—Your most affectionate and lonely friend,

"R. E."

The answer that Jamesy, the underground postman, carried back to the writer of the foregoing letter, read as follows. It was Grace's third "draft."

"BROWNELL VILLA.

"DEAR MR EMBURY,—I am afraid that it is very wrong of you to ask me to meet you in the evening. But I could not go anywhere with you very well in the day-time, and there are some things that I think I ought to say to you. You are to listen, too, and not argue back all the time, putting poor me off the track.

"So if you are at the maple at nine o'clock, Friday night, I will come for a minute. Suzette will be with me. I think it is just awful for girls to steal out at night to meet young men, but in my case it really is not stealing out, for no one has forbidden me to go. Then I shall not be alone, and I have a good object in coming.

"Be sure and be in time.—Your sincere friend,

"GRACE BROWNELL.

"Please burn this note."

A full twenty minutes before nine Ryerson was walking up and down in the neighbourhood of "the maple," keeping a nervous watch down the street in the direction from which he expected to see Grace and Suzette emerge. He had grown perceptibly older in appearance since that spring day of a year ago when he went May-flowering with Grace and kissed her hand with the white skin and the rosy palm. A creditable moustache now covered his upper lip, and his mouth had a firmer set. He looked out on the world with two resolute eyes,

and the semi-diffidence of conscious boyhood was entirely gone. His whole bearing was manly; and one could hardly imagine him now, as he trod up and down, showing shy surprise at "Maddenisms," or, for that matter, anything novel in the world of thought. He had none of the conscious frippery of conceit, but he had "become a man" and looked ready to face what might come with courageous optimism.

Two figures came out of the dusk, one stopped short, the other paused irresolute and then came on toward him.

"Ah, Grace," he said, going up to her with both hands held out, "I am awfully glad you have come."

She gave him one hand only, which he took in both of his.

"I can only stay a minute," she panted; and then added quickly, "though, of course, there is nothing wrong in my being here."

"Not a bit of it," he assured her heartily; "and then no one will see us."

"Let us walk up and down," she suggested. "It will not look so strange as standing still."

He agreed and thrust his arm beneath hers, but she drew quickly away.

"That's a bad beginning," he hazarded jokingly.

"Are you accustomed to take the arms of young ladies on a smooth sidewalk?" she queried by way of reply.

"I think it is not unusual," he said lightly.

"Oh!" with an inflection of deep comprehension.

He looked at her in puzzlement a moment, for he guessed nothing of incipient jealousy of Josie Fitzgerald or of anyone else; and then said,—

"You don't know how good it is to see you again after all these weary days. What a pity your mamma thinks me naughty!"

"Well," and her eyes would have shown trouble if he could have seen them, "haven't you been naughty?"

"Not unless it is naughty to speak the truth as one sees it."

"Oh, but, Ryerson—Mr Embury, I mean—"

"Ryerson," he insisted. "Surely you—"

"How many other people call you 'Ryerson'?" she flashed at him.

"Precious few down here. But why?"

"Oh, nothing. Well, Ryerson, then"—a pause—"why can't you see that religion is true?" she at last blurted out with the fearful directness of a maid in an argument. "You must know that all the people in the world who believe the Bible to be true, and all those who have died in that belief, knew more about it than you can at your age."

His face expressed sorrow and a trace of impatience. "Unhappily I can't take their 'say-so' for it," he sighed.

"Yes, I know," she went on feverishly. "You say that Dr Holden and those who ought to know



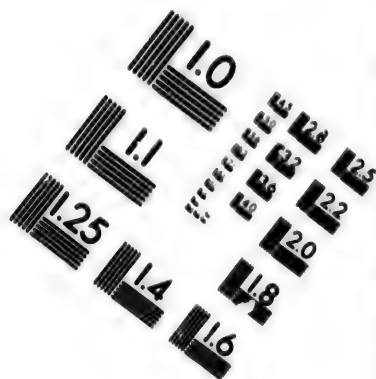
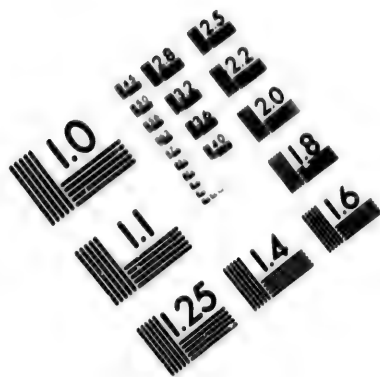
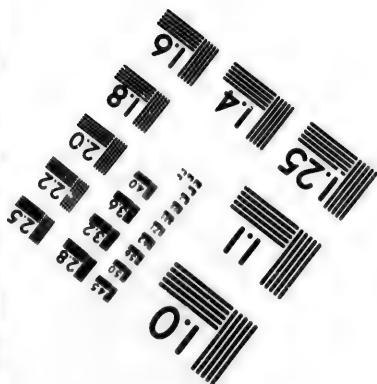
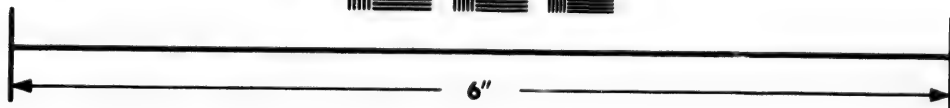
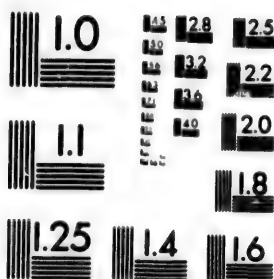


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will not go over the question with you point by point; but still the fact that they believe it themselves ought to count for something."

"But if they can't give a reason," he began.

"Oh, but they can," she assured him with emphasis; "but Dr Holden says that when a young man has been brought up in a Christian country by Christian parents the way you have, he ought not to need being constantly retaught the simple truths of the Gospel." She was a bit out of breath at this but went sturdily on. "You ought to hear what nice things they say about you, too. They say that you, being so clever, might do untold good if you had not gone astray; and I don't see why you can't have faith," and she looked up at him with eyes so earnest, so blue, so unconsciously beseeching, as he stalked along beside her, that if he could but have seen them he must have thought favourably of bowing his neck to the "old superstition" as he called it for choice; but the night was dark and his soul was hot within him against the service of this sweet girl to the said "o. s." There is nothing, he was learning, so intolerant as a belief that one has the truth, unrelieved by the knowledge that liberty is the supreme truth.

They walked along in silence to the end of their "beat," turned and started back before he spoke. Then his words came with gravity and deliberation.

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this question, Grace. You are so willing to take things on authority, whereas I"—and he tossed his head up—"must at least ask that 'authority' give its reasons. Don't think that I should not like to believe as you and my mother and father do, but belief is not a matter of choice—it is not voluntary. I cannot believe what I will, but what I must. If I am to be your friend, it must be as I am and not with the mask of a hypocrite—no"—and he recalled a phrase coined during one of the many restless hours when he dramatised argumentative conversations with various people—"nor with the stifled feeling of one who smothers his reason under the rose-leaves of conventional and long-established custom." And he looked at her as a bowler does at the nine-pins when his hand has just launched a satisfactory ball.

"But, Ryerson"—she stopped short and turned and faced him—"I KNOW it is true. You would take my word about anything else; why won't you believe me in this?"

"How do you know, Grace?"

"Why—why—you know"—her fingers locked and unlocked nervously—"it's the 'witness of the Spirit.' You wouldn't even come to the revival this last time. How can you expect to 'get light' when you won't ask for it? But I KNEW—all the Christians there KNEW the—the truth of—of religion. Don't stand there looking at me so stupidly. You know very well what I mean."

And she moved on again swiftly, with her face held down and tears of vexation at her ineffectiveness in her eyes.

Ryerson caught up with her in a moment. The last break in her voice had brought his pride of reasoning down as the loosening of the knees does the body.

"Don't let us quarrel about it, Grace. We will all see the truth some day," he pleaded. As she made no answer, he went on presently—"We have so little time together, we mustn't spend it all talking about creeds.

'This moment's a flower too fair and brief
To be withered and stained by the dust of the schools,'"

he quoted. "Let's talk of ourselves and leave religion to the preachers."

"But we can't see each other if you remain irreligious," Grace managed to say calmly at last.

"Oh, yes, we can—like this, even if the worst comes to the worst."

"No, we cannot," replied Grace, with decision. "You may have lady friends who will steal out to meet you at night, but I will not do so—as a regular thing."

"But your mother is wrong in keeping us apart for so trivial a reason," Ryerson began to argue.

"The reason is not trivial," said Grace, slowly, as if admitting an unpleasant truth. "It is the most important in the whole world."

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"Grace!"—in jocose reproach.

"Yes, it is. We can never be near friends, thinking so differently as we do."

"I'm willing to try."

"That's because you don't respect my feelings at all," vehemently. "You don't think what I think—is worth—eh—thinking about at all."

Again there was silent pacing for a time, during which Ryerson plumed himself on his forbearance and Grace nursed a sense of grievance because he did not contradict her last accusation. Both mental processes were badly calculated as precursors of peace. Ryerson would have been far better employed, had the night been lighter, in marking the curve of her cheek; and the tenderness that such employment would have brought to his eyes would have been more winning than much argument. Cupid looks better naked and rosy in the summer sunlight than blue-stockinged and clad in a wrangler's gown, disputing with a fevered forehead.

"What would you do, Grace," Ryerson asked at last, "if you had to choose between me and your religion?"

"You never would ask me to make such a choice if you cared," she returned passionately.

"No, I should not ask it," said Ryerson, "but circumstances might."

Grace made no reply to this.

Presently Ryerson, who felt within him a rush

of anger against the unreasoning devotion of this girl to her "ridiculous religion," burst out with,—

"Why are you so fettered to your — your preacher-dictated religion? I know that women are the chief stay of all priesthoods, and that all women have a tendency that way, but I know no other girl who makes so much of her religion as you do."

For a moment the pain of the unexpected onslaught kept the word back from Grace's tongue; and then she said, replying to his last statement first —

"I suppose not. You can find plenty of girls who care nothing of religion; and"—her manner was dignity itself—"you may go and—and be with them as soon as you like."

"Oh!" was Ryerson's comment. "But come," he added, "don't let's quarrel over this blessed religion that you have got and I haven't. When can I see you again?"

"When you learn to respect my convictions."

"What about respecting mine, Grace?"

"I hardly knew you had any."

"Yes," there was a sensation of cold steel in hearing his voice, "I have a conviction that your religion is a sham, and that you couldn't give the poorest reason for the 'faith that is in you'; but that you care immensely less for me than you do for it, little as you understand it."

"You—you," began Grace, but she could say nothing more.

When they reached the end of their "beat" nearest to Suzette she simply walked straight on without a word. He followed her quickly and poured "Grace, Grace! Don't be angry!" into her ear, but she paid no heed. In a moment she had joined Suzette, when she turned and said, in a voice that shivered,—

"Good-night, Mr Embury."

X

THE effect of such an encounter upon a girl of Grace Brownell's sheltered experience and tender nature was far in excess of the proper force of the cause. To Josie Fitzgerald it would have been "a quarrel" and nothing more. A day or two of reserve on her part and an outburst of penitence from the offending young man would have erased it from the memory—though the scars of such flesh wounds last long after we have forgotten the occasion. But to Grace Brownell it was no "lover's quarrel." It was a blow in the face, a blasphemy, a cruel betrayal of her trust in going out to him at night, a corroboration of the teaching that infidelity coarsens and depraves the victim. He had never spoken to her so before—never. For that matter, no one else ever had, but that hardly lessened the force of Ryerson's attack. He had called her sacred religion "a sham," and declared with pitiless scorn that she did not understand it. The tears scalded her eyelids at the thought. That night it was late before she slept; and in youth an emotion that conquers sleep is a powerful one indeed. In the

morning she was white and pre-occupied, and at noon her appetite had not yet come back to her.

"What *is* the matter, Grace?" asked Mrs Brownell.

Grace looked at her and her eyes filled. Now Mrs Brownell had a large heart if a narrow mind, and had always managed to keep the confidence of her daughter. That afternoon, in the privacy of her own room, Grace told her the whole tragic story, and now it was Mrs Brownell who had a white face and a pre-occupied air.

"None too soon," she said to herself, when Grace had gone comforted but forlorn to her room. "She cared a good deal for him. What *can* a mother do? I just think that such young men should not be permitted to go to college."

The result was that Grace went for a visit to an uncle's where there were three girls and a young man in family, and stayed a round month. She had never known these cousins very well before, for they were more boisterous and worldly than the Brownells quite approved.

Ryerson walked himself sleepy the night of the dispute, and abused himself considerably the next day for his precipitation. Relief came when he thought that he would look in on his old Sunday School just for fun the day following, which happened to be Sunday, and see Grace home. On Sunday, however, he bethought himself that it would be awkward for him with his present repu-

tation to appear in Sunday School; and so he concluded to stroll past outside at the usual breaking-up hour. He timed himself well. The children came boiling out of the church door just as he swung quite by accident into the street leading along in front of the building. Many of them recognised him and gave him noisy greeting. Grace's class came out in whispering couples—but no Grace. The children who hung upon him gave him capital reason to delay. The stream from the door straggled and stopped—still no Grace. Then the Rev. Arthur Drake Walters came smiling out alone, with a couple of books under his arm, and set off briskly up the street in a direction that he would have taken if he had been going to the Brownells'.

"Very well," remarked Ryerson, in answer to nothing in particular; and, giving the little fellows about him a joke to remember him by, set off himself in a direction which presently led out upon the Glen Ewart road. It was a capital afternoon for a walk; the days were getting long again and the road was in many places quite dry. From the first, he was conscious of his intention to walk out to Glen Ewart and see Josie Fitzgerald, who would be spending Sunday at home. But several times along the road he stopped, almost convinced that he ought to turn back. She would take so determined a "call" too seriously. Then he could hardly avoid seeing her father, a squat, familiar,

vulgar old man, who offended his sense of refinement sorely. He would probably be in shirt-sleeves of a Sunday and in an odiously social mood. But always his pauses for consideration ended in his going on toward the pretty little village of Glen Ewart. Once it was a picture of the smiling Walters "taking tea" at the Brownells' that turned the scale; and at another time the memory of the charming way in which Josie's rich voice—deeper than usual with a girl—rounded off the precise English learned at the academy with surviving touches of her natural brogue.

Arrived at the Fitzgerald Inn, he opened the door and looked into the sitting-room. The old man sat, with three or four slow-moving neighbour lads who had dropped in, with his coat off, as Ryerson had anticipated, and huge carpet slippers on his splay feet. He scrambled to the said feet briskly enough when he saw Ryerson, however, and in answer to an inquiry touching Miss Fitzgerald's whereabouts, shuffled off to get further instructions from that young lady herself. It was quite a time before he came back, and then he had a coat on, and with much politeness invited Ryerson to follow him upstairs to the family sitting-room.

When Ryerson stepped into this apartment he knew that he had risen to a different social stratum. Josie came to meet him with just a suggestion of that bounding step which had stirred him with its lithe beauty when he had first seen her, for now it

was hidden as much as might be under the proper "glide forward" which Miss Taylor taught her pupils as the correct manner when advancing to greet a caller. A soft wool gown, in which red predominated, clung to her figure and gave one an instant impression of luxuriant beauty of form, riper, perhaps, than would be looked for in a girl of Josie's age. The hand she gave Ryerson pulsed with life, and felt velvet and vital under his pressure. The room was certainly too floridly furnished, and might have been even gaudy in a strong sunlight; but Ryerson saw it then in a luminous twilight, and during the evening by the rays of a rose-shaded lamp. As they sat chatting, the twilight deepened, but when Ryerson moved to go, Josie insisted on his taking a little something to eat first—"just a biscuit and a glass of wine."

When the maid rapped for admittance to bring it in, she entered with a small table which in a moment or two she had covered with a daintily-served supper, having cold chicken as a foundation and hot tea and sponge cake to top off with. Josie laughed at Ryerson's astonishment and clapped her hands in delight when he ejaculated, "Chicken! Think of it. Oh, wouldn't Madden like to be here!"

"You might have brought him," said Josie, invitingly. "Not much," returned Ryerson; "not if the Court knows itself—this is not too big for

two." And Josie's smile was softer now than it had been, and her white hand moved in and out among the teacups and appertaining ware for all the world like a poised humming-bird.

After tea they agreed that it was a little chilly, and Josie sent for some dry chips and a few pieces of hard wood, and they knelt down together in front of an old-fashioned "parlour stove" that stood in the room, which had sliding doors in front that exposed the blaze when pushed back, and by joint endeavour soon had a jolly, ruddy fire streaming up out of the miniature "fireplace." It was then, when the firelight played full upon their feet as they sat back in front of it, that Ryerson noticed that Josie wore low slippers—so low that it made one wonder how they hung on at the toes at all—and that the stocking that covered the arch of her foot was red.

Their talk was a good deal of it banter, a good deal of it gossip, some of it about light literature, more—much more—about the things they each liked and didn't like. She played to him upon the piano her father had lately purchased for her; and he was more taken up with watching the swift, capable, tense play of her hands over the keys than in hearing the music. The flashing fingers that seemed so strong and yet so soft, so masterful and yet so melodiously gentle, partially hypnotised him; and he seemed distinctly to come to himself when she ceased to send them hither and thither over the keys

and turned her face up to his for approval. Then she wanted him to teach her some college songs; and, as he couldn't play, she sat down opposite him on the floor where the light of the fire flooded her face at unexpected moments and flickered over it at other times, when he taught her some new choruses by the device of singing a line and letting her sing it after him. This required that she should watch his lips very closely, and that when she was singing the eyes of both should be in constant telegraphic communication with each other.

At one time during the evening the carefully-wetted and down-plastered hair of Fitzgerald, senior, was poked in at the door and a tray carrying two glasses and a bottle of beer brought partially through. But the black anger in Josie's eyes stopped the old man.

"I thought it moight be gethin' a leetle dhry up here," he explained with a pathetically apologetic smile; but Josie said nothing and he backed out and stumped downstairs again. It took five minutes for the pair to recover from this. Later they got to talking of the future. Ryerson never had poured his ambitions into a more sympathetic ear. This girl's whole life was ambition. When his hope faltered and he prefaced the mention of a daring idea with, "I know I can never do it," she would hearten him with her fervid assurance that there was nothing he might not do. She had heard him speak, and no other young man of his age was his

equal. Did he not lead his class last year? The world would see him in Parliament yet.

But his religious opinions, he objected.

They had not hurt him yet, she retorted; and if they did, why, he could make his choice. She fully approved of his idea of going into law, and thought he might be a judge some day.

It was late when he started for the walk home. She came down to the door with him and gave him her hand in parting with a quiet dignity, curiously out of keeping with the garrulous clatter in the public parlour to the right. Her warm smile, her impulsive springing run into the street to see what the night was like, and her somewhat wistful, "Won't you come out again?" were the memories that stayed with him on the walk home.

"Her eyes are as bright as the stars at night,
And as wicked as wicked can be;
And her foot is lighter and her ankle tighter
Than Venus de May-de-chee,"

he sang as he tramped blithely along under the spring moon as it glinted from behind flying spring clouds. And when he climbed the stair into the room which he and Madden shared between them, he was still singing,—

"Her lips are red as a tulip bed,
And I'd like a kiss to steal-O;
She possesses two arms, thus passing the charms
Of the Venus of Mee-lo."

"Hello! you wanderer," came sleepily from Madden, who had already gone to bed. "Where the deuce have you been since noon?"

"Learning that there 'are others,'" returned Ryerson, jauntily.

"Did you here the news?" asked Madden.

"No. What?"

"Masterson's men are out on strike, and they say that Williams's men will follow."

"Humph!" commented Ryerson. "They'll all be back again jolly soon. But the real news is, Mad, old boy, that—

"Her cheek is rosy and her name is Josie,

And she's the girl for me.

Her form's as round, though more fitly gowned

Than Venus de May-de-chee."

X I

Coy Miss Spring tripped and smiled and dimpled into the languorous and prolific matron of Summer, and then stiffened into the more stately dame of Autumn, who displayed a growing fondness for the "colour box" as the days wore on. And still the Masterson-Williams "strike" continued. At first the air was full of threats of violence. Ryerson always remembered that those last days when he was "cramming" for his B.A. examinations were charged with the expectation of something very exciting about to happen. A man would drop in to borrow his notes on "Spectrum Analysis," and interlard between an account of a "stiff paper" of three years ago he had just seen, and the news that Jack Gordon sat up till four o'clock yesterday morning reading Mill, the "foreign intelligence" that fifty new special constables had been sworn in to keep the strikers from breaking Masterson's windows.

"The riotous beggars!" would be Ryerson's very probable comment. "I wish exams. were not on and they'd swear a few of us in. We'd show them how to put up a scrimmage."

But exams. most emphatically were "on," and the

relations of sodium to chlorine were far more to Ryerson than those of labour to capital. When he took his short constitutional "after four" to clear his brain for the night's reading, he would see groups of sullen-looking men standing idly about; or if he went over into the district where the foundry men lived, women with shawls over their heads appeared to be perpetually grouped about some neighbour's door talking despondently. But he only thought of it to wonder at the stupidity of men who would not work when they could, preferring rather to let their families go hungry. One night—the night before he was going to write on "honour botany," he remembered—the fact of the strike was thrust vigorously upon his attention. When Madden came home to tea he had reported that it was rumoured that the men were going to "demonstrate" that night before the residence of Dr Holden, who had preached a sermon the preceding Sunday from the text, "Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters, according to the flesh," in which he argued learnedly that a strike was unscriptural—especially a strike which presumed to prevent the master from hiring another servant. Madden was delighted at the prospect of a popular rising against a "minister," but Ryerson felt the student's desire to champion a professor against these "grimy-fingered townsmen." Madden went out to see the fun, Ryerson being, of course, too busy. He sat studying with his window up as May had laid a caressing hand on the wander-

ing air and soothed it into balminess. For a long time the growl of distant shouting came to him fitfully through his study of petals that form a tube and pistils that grow in unexpected places; but suddenly the relative peace of the night was broken by the charge of running footsteps down the street and the excited repetition of the familiar cry, "All up, Ithica, all up!" with this new addition, however, "On to Dr Holden's." Ryerson dropped his notebook; and, a moment or two later, was running down the street toward the doctor's house. The hubbub increased as he approached, and rounding the last corner, he saw a sea of men swaying and churning in front of the Holden residence. Across the street from him, and nearer the house, another street ran into the one he was on, and at the junction a lively row was in progress. Cries of "All up, Ithica, all up!" clashed with oaths and angry shouts, but clearly the students were making little impression on the crowd. Directly in front of the house something was going on, Ryerson could not make out exactly what. He began to push his way to the scene of the students' attack, when a general cry from the crowd called his attention to the house again. Something was blazing high and fiercely opposite the front gate.

"They're setting the house on fire!" exulted a voice in his ear.

"No," said another, "it's the damned ——'s effigy they're a-burnin'."

"Pity it wasn't the house," rasped the shrill voice of a woman. "Then that miminy-piminy girl of his'n might know what it is to sleep on the floor."

"Bosh!" grunted a man. "Why should we burn the parson's when Masterson's mansion still stands?"

"Hush-sh-sh!" came from all sides. Someone was making a speech from the Holden verandah. The crowd nearest the house quieted down as if by magic.

"Why, I'm d——d if it ain't th' 'love-yer-neighbor' parson," said a chap wearing a collarless shirt and a greasy cap. "What's he got to do with th' likes o' Holden?"

"They're both of a trade, I tells ye," growled a companion. "How often has I got to tell ye that these here ministers alus sticks together?"

But the speaker was evidently having an effect on the men outside the gate, for presently those in front began to back away and the whole lot were soon moving off down the street. Ryerson found some of the college men, several of whom had bruised faces and torn clothes, and learned that the doctor, being panic-stricken at the arrival of the mob, had sent a message up to the college for help, to which they promptly responded. But probably nothing more had been intended than to burn him in effigy; and when this was done, Rev. "Tommy" Tracy, who was very popular with the men, had easily dispersed them.

"Well, they are a nervy lot," commented Ryerson, "to burn a man of Dr Holden's standing in effigy."

The idle period, with its nervous thread of piquant anxiety, which lies between the close of examinations and Convocation, taught Ryerson very little more of the "strike," for he felt no interest in it and hence no curiosity. He did hear the cause, however. Mr Masterson had reduced wages ten years before because times were hard and his profits had fallen off. Now times had notoriously improved, and both Mr Masterson and the Williams people were getting large profits. The men demanded a return to the old rate of wage, on the ground that if they had to help him bear the lean years they should share the fat ones. Mr Masterson laughed at this. The rate of wages were, he said, fixed by competition, like the price of his ironware, and the large importation of foreign skilled labour recently had increased the supply of labour more than sufficient to offset the growing profits of the business. He might have added that increased profits do not affect wages unless they increase the demand for labour, but this would have cast doubt upon the doctrine that lessened profits do affect wages, instantly and necessarily, in a depressing manner, and the time might come when he should need that doctrine again. Logic is a luxury that only poor men can often afford.

"That's a law of political economy," was Ryerson

son's judgment. "Old Masterson is right. The men cannot get away from that."

But soon the returns were "posted" and Ryerson was through with "honours" and a gold medal, and the sunlight would get into his head, and he was always shaking hands with somebody, and father and mother were coming up to see him get his degree, and the world and the future were all a golden haze. Josie Fitzgerald wrote him a neat little note of congratulation, and he walked out the Sunday afternoon before Convocation and spent the evening building air castles in her soft-lighted upstairs "parlour."

The first time that the "strike" appealed to Ryerson in a personal way was when he came back in August to take advantage of an unexpected opening in Webster, Saunders & Webster's office, which he found had been caused by the dropping out of a young student whom he had come to know fairly well during the winter while living with Madden. The young man had put in an industrious year in the office, and was considered to be doing very well indeed; but his father was one of the striking moulders, and, determined as the grim man was to "give his son a chance," the wolf had pushed his ugly snout within the door, and Allan Nichol, junior, must give up the law and go back to his old and well-paid place behind the counter at "Benson's." He took this step against the will of both his parents, who would have stood the siege of

want for a longer time, but young Allan was as decided as his father, and he turned his back on his future without a word.

Ryerson's feelings over this episode were mixed. He admired Allan's pluck but vigorously berated the stubbornness of the old man who would sacrifice his son to his pig-headed determination to carry his point with his "masters." Then he settled down to work and forgot Allan. A new interest suddenly arose. It became *on dit* in Ithica that Rev. Arthur Drake Walters was engaged, or about to be, to Miss Grace Brownell, and that he was to get the appointment to the assistant pastorate of the First Methodist Church in the town. This was an excellent vestibule to promotion for a young minister, including as it did the pastoral charge of a mission church in the suburbs and the privilege of occasionally preaching to the central congregation. Ryerson began by scouting the intelligence; then he declared it very probable—Grace Brownell was a devotee and Walters a fanatic; then he confided to Madden that it would be a terrible mistake—Grace, he said, is a genuine, true-hearted little woman, and that man Walters is a conceited ass. Next he became philosophic. It was no business of his. Grace had made her own choice with her eyes open, and we should see how she would like it. He would think no more about it at all. She had walked out of his life on that spring evening when she left him in a huff near the maple. Then he

sat down to write her a letter. He would beg her—no, he would not. He would just give her some cold advice. She did not know Walters like he did. Didn't she? Then she knew precious little of him, for Ryerson hardly knew the unctuous man at all. Anyway, he would write.

“WEBSTER, SAUNDERS & WEBSTER,
“*Barriers, Solicitors, etc.*”

“MY DEAR MISS BROWNELL,—I know it is an impertinence for me to write to you on the subject of your approaching marriage, but my interest in your welfare is my only excuse. Knowing you as I once had the opportunity of doing, I am CERTAIN that you will not be happy with Mr Walters. He is not worthy of you. For that matter, no one is.”

“That won't do,” thought Ryerson; “that's far too warm.”

So he struck out the last sentence and tried again.

“Your temperament is such that you must have a particular kind of husband or you will be very unhappy. He must understand and appreciate you—”

“Whe-ew! I'll be writing 'love you' next if I'm not careful,” said Ryerson, “and, by Jove, that's just what I mean!” Then he sat and

mused a while, with the result that he crossed out all he had written after his first sentence, and began once more,—

“A young lady of your refined temperament should approach marriage very carefully. It means so much to you. The story goes that Mr Walters is likely to be the preferred and fortunate man, but I simply do not believe it. You could not choose him—”

And again he stuck. “It looks as if I were going to say ‘after having known ME,’” was his comment as he regarded the last unfinished sentence. He tore up what he had written and went out. Two minutes’ walking without a purpose brought him opposite the Brownell residence. Mrs Brownell’s emphatic voice fell on the air.

“I think you are right,” Walters’s throaty tones replied. “Christian people are not bound to extend charity to the families of men who can work but will not. What does the Book say?—‘If any would not work, neither should he eat.’ I don’t think we are bound to support the striking class.”

Ryerson’s walking carried him out of earshot. “The striking class! The striking class!” he muttered half-unconsciously to himself. “If that cad condemns them, they can’t be so bad.”

XII

As for Grace, if she had heard the report that disturbed Ryerson, she would have felt, with an inward sinking at the heart, that it might possibly be true. She was in the spirit of sacrifice at this time—a spirit that had grown in intensity all summer. That month with her livelier cousins, which had immediately followed the quarrel with Ryerson under the spring sky, had compelled her to come reluctantly out of herself, and so had carried her over the period of sharp pain without time to do more than feel the distress. Had she been at leisure and in Ithica, she might have been subdued by it into a willingness to see that Ryerson had a “point of view” as well as herself; but when, after her month of never wholly pleasant activity, she returned to both her accustomed leisure and familiar Ithica, the sense of her loss had become imbedded in her consciousness as a fixture, and she chiefly thought of the reason for it—her loyalty to her religion.

And if she could give up her love for her religion—she called it “her love” with a sad

sedateness altogether dead to the quickening pulse—what was there that she need withhold?

Rev. Arthur Drake Walters knew little enough of this, but he knew that Grace no longer made mock of his best compliments and that she would sit on the Brownell verandah and listen to his talk for hours together. His best "cue," he found, was semi-religious discourse; and he was even alarmed to find in Grace a rare taste for pious tales of noble renunciation and missionary sacrifice. He took pains to assure her from time to time that all were not "called" to the mission-field, nor were all set apart for lives of abnegation.

To tell the truth, this excellent young man, who never had a doubt as to the perfect propriety of his intentions and the supreme worthiness of his ideals in life, and the still more excellent Mrs Brownell, who was full of intentions but hardly conscious of ideals, had their times of trial with Grace during this summer. Had they known the jargon of æstheticism, they would have said that she was "too intense"; but, as it was, they simply suffered and remonstrated and explained and marvelled over her.

"How can we live such empty, idle, useless lives?" exclaimed Grace one torrid afternoon to the relaxed Walters, who was stretched out in great comfort on the velvet lawn in the shade of an elm, with a red-streaked "Astrakan" in his fingers. "How can we?" she insisted. "There

are lots of people in Ithica who care nothing for religion. Why don't we go and talk to them—plead with them?"

Walters was used to such "spasms" by this time, and he merely looked away uncomfortably. Grace sat straight up, with her hands locked in her lap and her earnest face and intense blue eyes turned toward where Walters's face would have been if he had sat up too.

"Some are giving up so much," she murmured, half to herself; "and others seem to care so little about it."

"But, Grace," ventured Walters—he had long ago gained the privilege of her first name—"it is no use to persecute people. The Church is doing what it can."

"But are we? Are we?"

"What would you like to do?"

"I—oh!—I—I can do nothing—more."

"Oh, yes, you can," and Walters turned over so that his elbows supported his upturned forearms and his encouraging smile was lifted nearer to Grace's sadly passionate face. "You can furnish cheer and encouragement and womanly solace to one unworthy labourer in the vineyard. What would we men be without you women?"

The intense blue eyes turned full on him, and their passionate inquiry went through him and into his very soul. And then they clouded as if they found not that for which they sought, and

the encouraging smile fell from his face, and his eyes quivered and there was white on his cheeks; for he knew then, as well as he ever would, that he had been weighed in the balances of a great earnestness and found wanting.

But Grace had sunk down in weariness, and stared, through the long silence that followed, at the rows of grass blades which came up between her spread fingers.

Sometimes it was the mother whose tear-filled eyes watched the struggles of the girl against her great helplessness.

"I want to do something in the world, mother," Grace would say. "Something of use—something to help people."

"Why, you are of great help to me every day, Grace," the distressed and little comprehending woman would answer; "and what your father would do without you, I can't guess."

"Yes, I suppose. But I like to do that—that's for love. That's just for my own people and is selfish. But I want to do something, in a religious way, you know, outside of my own family."

"You can work in the meetings next winter."

"But that seems to accomplish so little. They—the people—will not come to the meetings for us to get at them."

"Why, yes, they do, Grace. You are forgetting."

And the intense blue eyes would turn away this time, and pass through the window and far,

far out toward—nothing. Whatever else she was doing, she was not forgetting.

Then there were days when she seemed not to have a serious thought—when, if you had not known her in the time of her sweet equipoise, you would have thought her the maddest, the most reckless girl in Ithica. Mr Walters did not enjoy these days, though he made a magnificent pretence at doing so. She would keep him on the tennis court until his circular clerical collar was a yellow streaked ruin, and his prized voice too thick for utterance. Then she might want to be read to, or she might want to take him calling. When company was present she delighted, in such moods, to bother him about his foibles.

“Do you know a curious thing?” she said one day to Miss Bertha Huntington, while that young lady sat “riding” the rail of the verandah and Walters and Grace and two or three others filled roomy chairs in front of her. “Mr Walters did not always have three full names. He lent me a book the other day in which he had written ‘Arthur D. Walters.’ Think of it! What would Mr Walters be without his ‘Drake’?”

“Or without his ‘duck,’” murmured Miss Bertha.

“I’ll tell you about that—” Mr Walters began heavily and with an amiable smile.

“Do!” urged Grace, with a laugh that set every nerve jarring in pained sympathy. “I should

like to know when you thought it prudent to add 'rake' to your label." And she laughed again with her foot well down on the loud pedal—so unlike her glad-toned girlish laugh of but a little while ago that they all turned a furtive eye upon her.

"Well," said Walters, in the pause re-lighting his amiable smile, "when I was a young man—"

"Before you had heard of Hugh Price Hughes," put in Miss Bertha.

"Or Mark Guy Pierce," laughed Grace, seconding the vicious thrust as in her right mind she would not have dreamed of doing.

Some red got into Walters's face at this; but he persevered with the plodding persistence of those who have little alertness and only win by patient endurance of "punishment."

"It was no such example that changed me," he stolidly asserted. "I came to the conclusion—"

"Do you know," burst in Grace, with a rush and a voice that told you that the jarring laugh was within, eager to escape from her lips, "that you remind me of Hugh Price Hughes at this minute?"

The badgered Walters looked up with a smile that was fast turning grey, and asked his helpless—

"Why?"

"Because you have 'hue' at one end—I see it

in your face—and shoes at the other—” and the threatened laugh came with an effect not unlike the jar of thunder after a warning flash. There was little laughter though from the rest of them, and Mr Walters gave up his attempt to explain, and that company never knew why he had decided to spell out his middle name.

But for all this by no means painless “perseverance,” the young “saint” had his reward. The “strenuous” days and the “reckless” days were really far fewer than those other days when Grace was like her own sweet self, much as an incurable invalid is like the man he was before he knew of his slow death-sentence. The glad light that had kindled in her eyes when the voice of Ryerson was in her ear never came there, it is true, but Walters did not miss it, for he had never seen it. But the endearing poise of her head, always seeming to be seeking a shoulder to cushion against, was still there; the soft oval of her cheek had not fallen away, and the tremulous, innocent, appealing sweetness of her adorable mouth was still potent to move the hearts of those who looked with a longing to protect, to preserve, to possess.

Mr Walters had “spoken” to Mr Brownell, and had been told without preamble that the decision was with Grace. Mrs Brownell had endorsed this ruling, but added her “best wishes.” More than that, she had told Grace of it that same

day, and Grace had looked at her with that intensity of gaze no one quite liked to meet, and said presently,—

“I wonder if it would be for the best.”

“You would have a splendid chance to lead a useful life,” commented her mother.

“Yes”—slowly—“so it is always said. But he—mother—he—do you think that he would help one to be really useful?”

“He ought to—he’s God’s minister.”

“Ah! But—but—” and Grace’s face turned toward her mother, lined with doubt and suffering, and her eyes were full of misery.

With a sob, the mother had taken her daughter to her arms and held her tight—tight for a full minute before either spoke, and then Mrs Brownell whispered,—

“You must be happy in your marriage, my darling, you must be happy.”

Grace was crying, and she cried on and on, and her mother led her to a sofa and comforted her as if she were still a little girl, whose whole horizon is no further away than to-morrow.

It was August when Walters thought that he had found an opportunity to “speak” to Grace herself. It offered a few days after Ryerson had come up to town to take his place in Webster, Saunders & Webster’s. She had seen him on the street, and the spur of the spirit of sacrifice was pressing more deeply than ever into her tender flesh.

"Mr Walters," she said—her manner was formal though sweet, and her lips twitched—"I shall conceal nothing from you—I do not love you—not with an earthly love. I know it, and I know that I never shall. If you wish to withdraw your offer of marriage now, you may." And she looked at him with a quiet gravity that chilled the lover in him almost to silence.

"But, Grace, you may learn," he managed to say; and there was so little of conscious superiority left in his manner that the girl looked at him with a softening pity in her eyes.

"You love me," she whispered, putting out her hand toward him.

"Yes—yes," he urged, a great genuineness filling his face. "I love you—I would—I must have you," and he seized her hand and drew her up out of the chair in which she had been sitting, and almost had her in his arms, when with a quick, sharp cry she dashed her other hand into his face and pushed him back.

"No, no," she said, panting. "You must never do that—never. Promise me that you will never try to do it again."

He stood white and wondering, and said nothing.

"Promise me," she demanded, "or I shall never see you again."

"But, Grace," he began protestingly, while she watched him with hostile eyes in which the blue was now of a steely cast, "I don't want to promise

that. You might be willing yourself some day," and he smiled faintly.

Her face hardened still more ; and then, as she looked at him, it seemed slowly to melt. The lips fell loose and grew a little tremulous. Then a gravity came into the eyes, and the lines of the mouth settled into sadness.

"You must let me think of this, Mr Walters. If you love me, I must not wound you on that side. Nor must I turn hastily away from what may be a leading of Providence."

She had moved behind her chair by this, and was standing with both her hands resting on the back of it, the attitude, the voice and face suggesting her manner while giving her experience in "class meeting." Poor Walters perceived it, and his misery deepened. That was the attitude he fancied her most in, her air was so full of sweet gentleness and a deathless devotion. Yet, while she thus reminded him of the Grace he coveted the most, he hardly wanted to be taken as a "religious blessing."

"I will think of it," she went on ; "and we will both pray over it."

"Oh, Grace, Grace," he burst out, "can't you love me as a man longs to be loved—as I love you ?"

"No," she said quickly, and stepped back a pace as in alarm ; then recovering, added, "I will think of what you have said—if you are willing that I should."

"Yes. Better that than nothing."

"Very well. And you promise never to—to touch me."

"Not unless you are willing, Grace."

"Very well." And she stood waiting in silence for him to go, until he, perceiving her intent, had for once the tact to fall into her mood and make his farewell with a quiet bow.

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XIII

ONE Sunday morning in September, Madden reminded Ryerson that they had not seen Allan Nichol for many a long day, and suggested that they look him up and take him for a walk. "It will brighten the poor beggar up a bit," he said, "and give him a whiff of something besides bogus bargains and goods 'marked down' to several notches above the ordinary selling price."

"Good idea," agreed Ryerson, his eyes concurring. "I've often wondered, don't you know, if we couldn't do something for that fellow. It seemed an awful shame that he should have been put out of the game that way—caught by his father's elbow, so to speak, when he drew back to make his 'strike' at Masterson."

"A strike that kicked, eh?" commented Madden, reaching for his hat; "and that's a cursed bad habit common to most strikes," he added sententiously.

The house of Nichols, the moulder, was a cosy brown-frame structure, located in the middle front of a quarter-acre lot on a retired tree-lined street leading down to the river. It was a full half mile

from the "works," for Mr Nichol made a boast of keeping his family out of the "soot." The yard was suggestive of a loose tangle of shrubbery, with unrestrained flowers playing at hide-and-seek with you through the mazes, rather than of a number of show plants imprisoned in geometrical beds—an arrangement which betrays the fact that the gardener's best notion of beauty is order; and off to the side of the house was a parallelogram of lawn upon which they played croquet of an evening.

Mr Nichol sat out in the yard coatless in the September sun, reading, and two of his children played noiselessly near him. His face wrinkled with pleasure at the sight of the lads whom he knew to have been companions of his son in the prosperous days when "Allan was reading law with Webster, Saunders & Webster."

"Right glad t' see ye," he said. "Walk in!" And then called, "Alice! Alice!" in a low voice suggesting at once constraint and authority. When Alice appeared—a slighter rendering of Allan, with more gold in her brown hair but with his clear, confident eye and his nervous yet resolute lips—her father asked her in a yet lower tone to tell Allan that he had two visitors. She smiled her pleasure at this, and disappeared from the doorway like a fairy at a pantomime.

"How goes the strike?" Madden asked Mr Nichol.

He set his lips and nodded his head grimly. "Masterson's gone away," he said at last. "He's gone to take a holiday down in Montreal. He can afford to wait, and he knows it. We can't and he knows that too."

"Didn't you—didn't the men think of that at first?" Ryerson asked gently.

Mr Nichol's eyes blazed as he turned them on the young man. "Of course we did. Of course we did," he replied. "But there was nothing else for it. Some of us were getting along well enough, but more of us were getting deeper into debt with every year. Then it was the injustice of the thing!" and his big fist came down with a smash on the arm of his easy chair. "When Masterson reduced wages and we agreed to it, he said that it was because he was making nothing and could not run the works at a loss, and he promised"—Mr Nichol ticked off each word with his joined thumb and finger on the chair-arm—"to raise wages again when his profits increased. But he broke his pledge. He didn't do it. He thought we'd forget. But we didn't"—this last very grimly.

The lads sat silent, and presently he went on again. "No, with me it is not a question of win or lose. It is justice I'm after. The masters shall not lie to us with impunity. It is more than that!"—and he sat upright, grasping the arms of the chair with both hands. "The time is coming when they will give us our fair share of the earnings of the

'works' or neither we nor they nor anyone else shall work." His leonine head seemed to bulk larger on the eye at this; and Alice, who had come out while he was speaking, threw her arm across his shoulders, but not to soothe him as "the dove-eyed daughter of fiction" might have done, but to signify her comradeship with him, for her eyes flashed exactly like his and she lifted her dainty head with a precise copy of his defiant pose. Then Allan came, and the boys escaped from the hypnotism of the scene in hearty, jocose greetings of him.

Presently they carried him off for the walk they had planned, and the three made directly for the old river road leading through the wood. The September frosts had not yet tinged the trees with colour, but the green had a dead, varnished look, and the grass lay brown along the path-side. The river had shrunk in its bed, revealing wide layers of greyish limestone which had been worn smooth by the attrition of years. The boys told Allan stories of the office as they swung along; and they seemed deliriously funny to him, so thoroughly did he appreciate the point when the oddity of an inmate of the old office was the pivot of the joke, and so redolent of the sprightly, quick-brained life of the hopeful days when he, too, 'read law' did they seem. Finally Madden broke out impulsively with,—

"Say, old man! don't you think that this strike will soon end and let you come back again? I'm

sure Saunders would be delighted to give you a desk."

The gay light in Allan's face vanished at once, and in the sudden reaction little was to be seen there but sadness. He walked along for a few moments, cutting the weeds that grew by the path with a stick he had picked up, but saying nothing. Then he replied, without looking at the boys, however,—

"I see no immediate prospect of an end to the strike, and even if it should end now, I could not go back to the office. Father—father put a mortgage on the place the other day to raise funds to put in the Union treasury."

"What!" and "You don't say so!" came from the two boys.

"Yes, you see," he went on, "the men did not get quite so much outside help as they expected, and it's been a pretty hard pinch for some of them. So there was talk of giving in, but father and a few of the men who have property said they'd rather sell all they have than yield through starvation."

"Well, but supposing that your father gets his increased wages, it'll take a long time to make up for that, won't it?" asked Madden, wonderingly.

Allan smiled a trifle wanly. "He don't look at it that way," he said. "It's—it's a religion with him to stand by his brother working men. He looks at it as you do at patriotism. If you went

into the army in time of war you wouldn't expect to get paid for the risk you ran. Well, that's his position in regard to this strike. He believes it's right. He thinks the men are being defrauded out of their just earnings, and he is making this fight to get them justice."

"But it's going to fail, isn't it?" asked Ryerson, a little breathless at this new view of the case.

Allan looked at him a moment intently, and then said, "Speaking privately, I think so—have thought so from the first. The chances were all with Masterson and the Williams people. But what could the men do? They must strike, or go on in the old way, getting less than their share."

Madden looked at him when he had said this with doubt and pity mingled in his eyes, as one who could crush him with a sentence but still cannot because of the pity he feels for him.

"Oh, you fellows don't know, can't know anything about it," burst out Allan in a sudden passion that was more like an agony. "I live among these people and I know. The best workmen do get their heads above the water a bit and begin to cherish some ambitions. But for the rest, there is nothing. You think it is a pity that I can't go on with law—and it is—for me. But I know more fellows than one who were cleverer than I when we all went to school together, yet who—who never got far enough out of the 'soot,' as father says, to have an ambition to study law or anything

else. They left school before I did; their fathers, looking for nothing, did not keep them at it. I remember that I envied them then," and the tired eyes of the lad smiled at the reminiscence. "But my father was laying by money, and he kept me there, telling me constantly that he would give me 'the education of a gentleman.' But these fellows, being free to come or stay away as they liked, stayed away, and loafed on street corners until big enough to be taken on at the 'works.' They had no other ambition. There was no other hope for them. They jeered at me when I went into Benson's; they jeered at me harder when I went into law; and they have jeered at me with a new relish since I have had to give it up. But, God knows, I feel no resentment, except for the moment, perhaps, when their taunts sting a little sharper than usual. They would have done as I did, only perhaps more successfully, if the very root of ambition had not been stunted within them by the conditions under which they grew up. It's not so much the physical hunger suffered by the poor that appeals to me. It always seems to me that that is a trivial thing that I could stand if necessary. If you live you get over that, and if you don't get over it, you don't live. But to be maimed in one's soul—to be turned from an aspiring man into a grinning, coarsened animal—yes, animal in whom even the divine sense of humour has soured into a cruel thing—and—and—rotted into something

obscene, and still to live on, content—sardonically content—that is hellish!”

Neither Madden nor Ryerson spoke when Allan had spent his passion, and for a time they walked steadily on through the windless wood. Then Allan began again, but in a calmer tone,—

“And the women, boys! and the young girls—theirs is a worse plight. I have had many chances, of course, of knowing what the surroundings of a lady are—what the tastes are of a normal woman who has had a sheltered life amid refining influences, and it nearly breaks my heart to visit the ‘parlour’ of a poor woman who is not entirely crushed down into the mud. The walls bear her pathetic efforts at feminine ornamentation—coloured advertising cards—”

“I’ve seen fashionable girl’s decorate with them,” Madden broke in.

“Yes,” said Allan, smiling at him, “so have I, but not one advertising card in a straw frame—not a torn one pasted tight against the wall—not the side of a room given up to three different-sized ‘cuts’ from illustrated papers, flanked by little bunches of business cards tacked to the unpapered wall; and I have seen all these in the last two or three days. I made one woman’s eyes shine only last Friday night by bringing her a few strips of the coloured paper we have some of our boxes lined with at Benson’s. And what do you think her husband said?”

"What?" asked Ryerson, whose face was vibrant with sympathy at the pictures Allan was drawing.

"Well, well," he said, taking up some of the frail paper and pulling it roughly through his hands, tearing a piece off the end of one of the strips in his carelessness, 'but you are an old fool to bother with these things. I could get you lots of them if I wanted to' (which was a fib, by the way), 'but you are putting on too many frills now for the likes o' you.' The woman pretended to laugh at this, but her anxiety for fear he would tear them worse kept her eyes on his hands. Then he tossed the stuff to her contemptuously, and she, being relieved to get it out of danger, said, with a good imitation of his own manner, 'It's not for me, you Dutchman, you, but for Sally and her dollie play-toys.' Yet I know that that same woman bought a picture once when bread was not too plenty and swore that the minister's wife gave it to her. Their hearts are hungry for the beautiful things of life, these women, but they hardly dare admit it to themselves; and they laugh with their men at any attempt toward it—laugh while they envy, until—well, that is the way slatterns are made."

"Come, old man," said Madden, genially, "you are getting morbid. This strike won't last forever."

"It is not the strike," returned Allan, hotly; "though the suffering it has brought is awful. It is the condition that made the strike. What would you do if your mother died under your eyes of con-

sumption when, if you could have sent her South for the winter, she might have lived for years? and if all through that winter you saw Mrs Masterson drive past your door every day with a couple of dogs in her lap that cost over three hundred dollars? That's what young Wilson did, and that's what made him hot for the strike."

"Well, will the strike help him?" asked Madden, argumentatively.

"Oh, I don't know, and he don't know," replied Allan, wearily. "But it's wrong—it's wrong; and if the men who own the 'works' won't divide fairly, then, by Heaven! the 'works' have got to stop."

This kind of talk was certainly not "brightening the poor beggar up," which was the object of the lads' visitation to Allan, but Madden succeeded at this point in creating a diversion, and the chat became gayer and Allan smiled once more on the world whose seamy side had been too much in his eyes of late. Finally Madden challenged Ryerson to take them over to Glen Ewart to dinner.

"Embury can recommend the cuisine over there," he said, winking at Allan.

"Of course I can," returned Ryerson, jauntily, obviously enjoying the innuendo. He had travelled a long way from the day when the casual mention of Grace Brownell's name, or a reference to her mother, even, would send his eyes to the ground. But perhaps his present position of something very like pride in his intimacy with the fair Josie was

not wholly reached by travel on his part. There are "girl adventures" that young men always like to be twitted about, and there are others of which they can never hear without embarrassment; and the wise young lady will prefer that she fall into the latter class. However this may be, Ryerson led the way over to Glen Ewart and introduced Allan to Josie Fitzgerald, and the three lads were served dinner in the stuffy little dining-room by a thick-fingered serving-maid with bad teeth, but with no Josie to brighten the table's foot as they had hoped. However, after they had dined and Madden and Allan had smoked, Mr Fitzgerald asked them upstairs to the private parlour, where Ryerson was by this time very much at home, and Josie was very chatty with all three until she learned that Allan had gone back to Benson's; and then she could only fairly be described as being chatty to two and a-half—Allan being the half. At the last she piqued Ryerson by drawing Madden off to a window which commanded an "alleged" view and talking closely there with him for an unconscionably long time, both breaking at times into irrepressible laughter. Consequently Ryerson stayed to have it out with her when the others said they must go.

He began by being sulky and she with chatting cheerfully along as if both were notoriously in the best spirits. Then he grew sarcastic, and she wondered with wide-open eyes what he could

possibly mean. Finally he became explicit, when she passed rapidly from amazement at the very idea that she was anything more than commonly friendly to Madden to solemn assurances that she was only trying to gain the good opinion of his friends, and then to reproaching him for quarrelling with her because she was agreeable to the persons whom he had brought to see her himself, and wound up by confiding in him that not one of them, nor any other young man she had ever met, could talk half so cleverly as he did or interest her half so much. This he believed sincerely, as fatuous young men are wont to, but he resolved within himself not to take Madden there again—Madden was such a conceited ass that he might think that Josie's attentions were for himself and not because he was the friend of Ryerson Embury.

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XIV

"THIS strike has done one thing, anyway," remarked Madden to Ryerson next day when they were walking down to the office. "It has soured some of these pig-headed workmen on their precious churches."

"Yes?" queried Ryerson.

"You bet yer life," was Madden's emphatic affirmative. "Old Nichol used to be as regular at church as the paid soprano, but Allan was telling me yesterday on the way home that he has not been near the place since the Charity Board, which the preachers and Church people run, you know, voted not to give any help this winter to strikers or their families."

"Well, I should think so," sniffed Ryerson. "Pretty sort of religion that."

"It's the kind Masterson pays for, I guess," commented Madden.

This cold-blooded action of the Charity Board recurred to Ryerson's mind again and again during the day, growing more repulsive the more he thought of it. The Board was a Union Church affair, and surely the Church should not take part

this way in a contest over a question of wages. His imagination toyed with the consequences of the Board's decision. He would, without leaning to, picture a family sitting in a squalid, winter-chilled room, and visited there by one of the Board's voluntary visitors, who turned away, however, and would not give them so much as a basket of coal because the father was one of the strikers. Then he called himself a "stupid" for distracting his mind with visionary woes, and plugged away harder at the point he was studying. But, in spite of himself, his imagination would play about this Charity which was decidedly a respecter of persons. Now it would be a scene at the Board offices—a "peaked" girl with broken shoes and a shawl over her head standing in a row of similar figures, waiting to get something in her basket. "Is your father dead, my girl?" "No, sir." "Can't he get work anywhere, then?" "No, sir. He's strikin'." "Bless me, don't you know that it is against our rules to give help to the families of strikers?" A quivering lip and the girl goes hungry away. When she reaches home—Bosh! This is no way to get up law. And again the lad would settle himself down to his reading with a mental thrust on the shoulder. But his mind was tricky. Now it would be Mr Masterson giving his annual subscription to the Board funds. It was the Rev. Dr Snowdon, a venerable member of the Board, who called for his donation. "He

that giveth to the poor lendeth to the Lord, Brother Masterson," the white-haired minister would say. "True, Brother Snowdon, but this is a 'call loan,' and if you let a striker's brat get any of it I want it back," would be the reply he would hear from the lips of the shadow Masterson. He felt all along that it was intensely stupid to plague his mind so much about a thing that he could not affect, but though he no longer had any part or lot with the Church, it pained him like a sacrilege to see a Christian organisation taking the part of the rich against the poor. It was out of harmony with the constant association in his mind of Christ with poverty, and with the scriptural warnings against riches.

That night he wanted to talk to somebody about it. But Madden was going out. And anyway, he felt that Madden would not be sympathetic toward his point of view. They neither of them believed the "Christian doctrine," and in that were at one. But beyond that he knew there was a difference. For Madden, this was a godless world, a world without right or wrong in it, a world where it was good to laugh when you could, and keep your feet, no matter who groaned beneath. But his own outlook he felt to be different. As to God, he did not know; but he believed in the reality of truth, in a right and a wrong, in—to come to the concrete—the wrongness of hurting another man and the rightness of, at least, giving

him a chance. He would go and see Allan. Allan ought to be fairly near to his point of view in this case, at all events.

Alice Nichol answered his knock, brightened at the sight of him come so soon again for her brother, and told him that, though Allan was out, he was only "over at Black's," whither she would send for him if Ryerson would come in.

"No, I want to take him for a little walk," Ryerson said. "I'll go over to 'Black's' for him if you'll tell me how to find it."

"Black's" proved to be a room behind a small general store, where the bachelor manager of the establishment liked to have a number of the boys "drop in of an evening." Allan came out into the store when he knew that Ryerson was asking for him, and chatted with him a few minutes at an empty counter while waiting for one of the fellows inside to finish with a paper of his he had been reading to the party when Ryerson arrived. Ryerson very soon asked Allan his opinion of the decision of the Charity Board that had troubled him, which led to some joint "swearing at large" on the subject, with the result that when a nervous-faced chap with a tossed mane of hair came out of the back room to give Allan his paper, Allan introduced Ryerson to him as "apparently an inquirer," at which both Allan and the young man with the ruffled hair smiled as at an old jest, and suggested that they take Ryerson into the "den."

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"By all means!" said he of the hair, genially.
"Come in and hear the proletariat tear."

As they approached the closed door of the inner room, a high-pitched, unmusical voice could be heard speaking with monotonous tones within; and when Allan opened the door, the words came to them,—

"—no more rights than I have. What protection has a capitalist for his capital except what we give him? What—" But the faces of his auditors told him that someone unfamiliar had come through the open door behind him, and he paused with his hand in the air and craned his sinewy neck around that he might see. Allan at once introduced Ryerson and piloted him to a chair on the other side of the room. The brownish, heavily-figured paper on the walls, and the circumstance that two of the men in the company wore grey flannel shirts and no collars, were the first facts to enter Ryerson's consciousness. There was a desk with pigeon-holes above it just at his elbow against the wall; a fireless stove with a suggestion of white about it stood in the middle of the floor; most of the chairs were of plain white wood; a torn and faded lounge with permanent depressions in its surface crossed one corner, and behind it was visible a heap of newspapers.

Allan explained that the reason he had brought Ryerson in was that he had expressed indignation at the action of the Charity Board, and that "that betrayed a sympathetic mind."

"What else would you expect?" asked one of the flannel-shirted men with an expansive smile. He sprawled, long-legged, on his tilted chair as if it were only a prop on which he adroitly balanced himself.

"I'd expect charity to favour the poor," replied Ryerson, his face going suddenly red.

"The contented poor! The poor and 'umble, my boy," said his questioner in mild tones. "Charity," he exclaimed, suddenly straightening up. "Charity is the chloroform that the rich administer to their victims. They oil the social machine with it in order that it may carry them with less unpleasant squeaking. It is the bounty with which they buy soldiers out of the army of labour."

The mixed metaphor appeared extravagantly ridiculous to Ryerson, but, fixed as he was by the vehement declaimer's eye, he had to let his sense of amusement pass off in a shiver down his back.

"You'll notice," said a pale-faced young man with thin lips drawn tightly over his white teeth. "that my friend, Mr Armstrong, generalises very freely. There is, charity and charity. When charity is love—the sense in which the word is usually employed in the Scriptures"—(his friend, Mr Armstrong, sniffed loudly at this) "it is the most beautiful thing in the world. But Mr Embury is not interested, I fancy, in the whole subject, but in this specific case. And here, what, indeed, are we to expect? Masterson, Williams

and that crowd are large subscribers to the Board funds. Would they be willing that their money should be used to sustain the strike? Certainly not. And that is the whole matter."

"But how about the preachers on the Board and the religious cloak it wears?" asked the young man with the waving hair whom Ryerson came to know as Morris Maclean. "Surely they were not supposed to be collecting a war-chest for those who grind the faces of the poor."

"Why not?" asked the pale young man. "Your whole simile justifies it. A strike is war; or rather a battle in a war. That is the way I justify interference with 'scab' labour. In times of peace you have no right to keep a man from working when he wants to; but when war breaks out, then you use what weapons you can get—"

The other flannel-shirted man—a keen-faced, steady-eyed chap with small but capable-looking hands—broke in at this to ask, "Do you think, then, that employers should use the militia and police to quell strikes?"

"Certainly, if they can get them," was the prompt reply. "And they generally do get them and practically all the other weapons; and that is one of the reasons—to digress still farther—why I think strikes foolish from the working-man's point of view. But to return. This strike being open war, of course the clergy of each party prays for the success of his friends. The clergy have

always done that from time immemorial. We, being poor men, are rather short on clergy, that is all."

"That's right, that's right," said the lanky sprawler, emphatically.

"We can't afford luxuries, I suppose," added Morris Maclean, "and so, of course, we can't pay plausible gentlemen to tell us that the neighbours we are enjoined to love as ourselves live in India but not in Ithica."

"Haven't I seen you at the Free Thought Club?" Armstrong suddenly asked Ryerson.

Ryerson eagerly assented, and the whole group fell into a general discussion of the effect of free thought and the attitude of certain Free Thinkers on the labour question. They all maintained against Ryerson that more sympathy was fairly to be expected from Free Thinkers than they—the labour agitators—actually received from them; and finally Ryerson was compelled to excuse their lack of concern for the labour cause by contending that they did not understand it. "At all events," said the slighter flannel-shirted man—his name was Bob Martyn—"they don't ask us to believe that it is good for us to suffer."

Then the discussion widened out. Morris Maclean argued that what the working man wanted was justice, not charity. "If he were only allowed to keep what he makes, he would be all right," was his contention. Allan Nichol

assented, but added that the only way to make sure of this was to nationalise all tools as well as all land, railways and the like. He was a "Socialist, out and out."

Bob Martyn didn't know that this would be necessary, and he thought that they should not attempt too much. They were all agreed that land should be nationalised; why not start with that and see how it would work?

"No," protested Morris Maclean, "I don't want land 'nationalised.' I want every man to have a perfectly good, permanent and individual title to his land; but I want the rental value taken for State purposes. And, further, I want natural monopolies nationalised, such as coal mines, railways, telegraphs and the like."

"Well, but suppose you do all that," persisted Allan Nichol, "you don't prevent the man who has capital from investing it and living all his life in idleness on the interest."

"I'll tell you a secret," said Morris Maclean, confidentially. "I'm a rebel against George on the interest question. I believe that the Single Tax will abolish interest."

"Fiddlesticks!"

"Yes, but I do. With private property in land abolished and a lot of artificial public obligations removed and natural monopolies nationalised, what can a man invest in that is not perishable? And in that case he will be more than satisfied to lend

his surplus capital with the prospect of getting as much back again."

This talk was all Greek to Ryerson, and when he asked for explanations the replies were little better. The grimness of poverty he understood; a strike for higher wages he saw the logic of clearly enough; but this confident talk about a change in land ownership curing poverty, and the State taking possession of "tools," was abstruse jargon to him. He could not for the life of him see the connection. For a few moments they fell foul of Protection, and then he was at home. His college text-book on political economy had, with scientific superiority, condemned Protection, and he had felt a mild wonder ever since at the stupidity of the politicians who could not see this thing. True, once or twice he had run into a politician who had argued him to a standstill on the question and shaken his faith in the kindergarten reasoning of the text-book; but now when he found these men disposing of Protection in the same "dead-sure" manner as that placid volume, he felt that he could talk with them—he had lived in that atmosphere himself. But for the rest he was at sea. Still, the talk had a curious effect on him. Apparently isolated statements were constantly being made which he instantly recognised to be true, and, moreover, to be unexplainable on his theory of life. Yet to these young fellows the truth of these strange and disturbing things

seemed to be the very proof they wanted of the theories they advanced. To them, they were explanations of life; to him, they were hopeless contradictions of his every idea of life.

For instance, Bob Martyn said, in the course of a long and vehement statement of which he understood little,—

“Wealth is seldom the wages of abstinence or of industry or of thrift. It comes to men who are squanderers, and are idle enough between their gambling bouts. Industry and abstinence in the majority of cases fail to get more than a meagre slice of it. There are exceptions; but wealth is generally the wages of a lucky bet—often on loaded dice—or the pilferings from a multitude of lean purses.”

Ryerson at once perceived this to be true, in part at least. But it was contrary to all text-book teachings on the subject. Yet Bob Martyn used the fact to clench his argument—plainly it fitted in with his theory of life.

“You haven’t read *Progress and Poverty*,” said Morris Maclean to him at one time when he betrayed his perplexity by a befogged question. “That’s what’s the matter with you.”

“Well, it need not be fatal,” said Ryerson. “I know how to read.”

“Good! I’ll send you one of my missionary copies of *P. and P.* in the morning,” Maclean promised. “I buy ’em for a quarter a piece, and

one book, plus ten talks, generally makes three converts."

"Then your converts cost you ten cents each, estimating your talks generously as worth five cents for the ten," calculated Jack Armstrong, with a broad grin.

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WHEN Ryerson came in from the office the following evening, a parcel that suggested a book but not a book-store—for the wrapping was very clumsily done—lay on his table. He tugged at the string a few futile moments and then cut it with his knife. The wrapping paper bristled up sulkily as if resentful at being tied down in so cramped and unnatural a position, and, when he had loosened it from its charge, revealed a paper copy of *Progress and Poverty*. It was a neat-looking book, and as he let the pages run out from under his thumb, the black type captions had an attractive appearance. But "tea" was ready, so he leaned it against the end of the row of books on his swinging shelf.

Neither that night nor for the next three did he get a chance to take it down again; and it was Saturday evening when, after an exhilarating afternoon in the golden September air, he reached up for it, adjusted his lamp shade, and settled himself in his arm-chair to give "this book of Maclean's a look over."

The table of contents read to him suspiciously like that of a college text-book on political

economy; and while it increased his respect for the work in his hand—it was plainly no campaign pamphlet—it doused his expectation of pleasure in the reading of it. He wanted to be thrilled and stirred, and here he was invited to study. Things said at “Black’s” that Monday night—daring things, pitiful things, things he had failed to understand—had been interpreting themselves to his mind at odd moments all week, and he was beginning to fire at “the wrongs of the disinherited”—at the silent tragedy of hereditary poverty. And he had come to *Progress and Poverty* expecting to find a trumpet call, a luminous exposure of the “crimes of the capitalist”; but here was a discussion of the Malthusian theory, of the “laws of distribution” and the question of land titles.

Then he turned over the page and read,—

“Ye build! ye build! But ye enter not in!”

The page went blurry under his eyes; then he lifted them and they shone out into the empty room as a man’s will when someone utters a truth his soul has long known but has been unable to speak. “That’s it,” he said to himself, nodding his head. “You patient workers! ‘Ye build! ye build! But ye enter not in.’” When he turned to the book again he found that this was only the first line of a quotation from Mrs Sigourney with which the author had, with marvellous art, prefaced his introduction.

The opening chapter, in which Mr George states "the problem" he is about to consider, heightened the effect of the quotation. Never have the persistence of poverty in the midst of progress, and the imperious problem which this amazing fact presents to all who do not take refuge with Cain in a denial of the claims of brotherhood, been stated with more of that supreme dramatic force whose chief elements are a calm mental poise and plain speech. When he had finished this introductory chapter, Ryerson felt ready for the most heroic plodding which might be necessary to arrive at the "remedy" he was promised at the conclusion of the book. His appetite was especially whetted by the confident way in which Mr George put aside the cures for poverty so often offered. He spoke of them, indeed, as heresies which must bring the masses into danger. "The ideas," he read, "that there is a necessary conflict between capital and labour, that machinery is an evil, that competition must be restrained and interest abolished, that wealth may be created by the issue of money, that it is the duty of Government to furnish capital or to furnish work, are rapidly making way among the great body of the people, who keenly feel a hurt and are sharply conscious of a wrong. Such ideas, which bring great masses of men, the repositories of ultimate political power, under the leadership of charlatans and demagogues, are fraught with danger."

This was not the kind of thing he had expected to hear from a champion of the labour cause. He thought that all labour leaders were at war with the capitalist, but this writer seemed not to be.

As he read on, Ryerson fell under the charm of that lucid and masterful style which never seems to conjecture but always appears to know. He was in the presence of a teacher of an exact science, not following the gropings of a searcher in the dusk. The writers whom Mr George pushed aside as he marched toward his four-square conclusions reminded Ryerson of a group of ill-prepared scholars guessing at the answer to the teacher's question, while the teacher smiled at their more or less happy attempts and finally gave them the right reply, which they instantly recognised as the exact truth. When he began the consideration of the wages question, the idea that wages are commonly advanced from capital seemed quite plausible to him; but when he had finished, there was not a suggestion of a doubt in his mind that wages are drawn from the product of the labour for which they are paid. The chapters leading up to this conclusion were as convincing as Euclid, though nothing like so dry. He was just beginning on the dissection of Malthus which follows when Madden came in from having smoked a jangling yet jovial evening through with some fellows down town.

"Y' missed it, Ry! You mole-eyed book-

worm, you!" was the smoker's noisy greeting. "Batters was down, and he sang—"

"Not much, I didn't miss it," Ryerson interrupted, laying his book open across his knee with as little reluctance as he could show. "Say! I've got the greatest book here you ever saw."

"What's it?"

"A book Maclean sent me—it's called *Progress and Poverty*—lays out the orthodox ideas on political economy with a flail."

"I've heard of it—Single Tax, isn't it?"

"Yes, but I haven't got that far yet. But he hasn't dropped a stitch as far as I have got."

"Your similes are getting too feminine, young man, since you took to the Glen Ewart road."

Ryerson grinned and then said, "He's just preparing to flay Malthus alive where I am now," and he picked up the book suggestively.

"Oh, Malthus is all right," declared Madden. "There *are* too many people in this botch of a world."

"I don't know what this book says about him yet. Will I read you a bit?"

"Let 'er go!" and Madden flung himself down on the bed, elevating his feet on the footboard.

The boys did not finish with Malthus and his libel on the Creator that night, for Mr George is at great pains to vindicate the sanity and humanness of the plan of creation, but they did finish it the next morning after breakfast before setting

out on their usual Sunday tramp. Then they went round for Allan Nichol again, and Ryerson came in for some chaffing because of his tendency to lead every thread of talk up to the "wages fund" or the problem of poverty. They dined at a riverside village this time, but afterward Ryerson let the other two go home alone while he struck across the country to Glen Ewart and the cosy parlour at the head of the stairs.

Josie was in brown when he got there, and nothing would do her but to cover her hair with a boy's cap and take him out into the woods again. And certainly the brown of her dress and the red of her cheeks found an admirable frame in the autumn woods. Then, as they talked, her eyes grew fuller than usual of wondering approval of the clever Ryerson. She had never heard him so impassioned, so impressive—so eloquent, she permitted herself to say, and she sympathised with him to the top of her appreciation. "I always mean to help poor people all I can," she told him; and then added with frankness, "for, you know, I have known well what it is to be poor."

Ryerson warmed at her sympathy and talked to her some of the philosophy of "Black's." Doctrines of a revolutionary tinge that he had not well digested yet himself came to his tongue, but the girl who was making her fight to climb the social ladder as it now stands did not greet them with any enthusiasm. She thought that "the sub-

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merged tenth"—the phrase had the relish of novelty to Ryerson—could emerge if they had the right ambition and determination. Her father was a case in point. Ryerson said something weakly about exceptions which proved the rule; but she insisted that she knew many cases in which families were poor simply through the inexcusable foolishness of the father. The thought that she was quoting instances studied from life in her father's bar pressed to the front of his mind and would not let him think of any other answer. Yet had he not heard at "Black's" that drink was not the cause of poverty, but poverty of drink? His foothold on the new road was, however, altogether too uncertain yet to enable him to withstand a charge; so he gave up the contest and brought the talk back to their favourite subject—his ambitions.

The next night he had his *Progress and Poverty* to himself again, and once more his hand felt the firm pressure of that of the master. At times as he read he thought of George as an impassioned writer, who appealed with a sure touch to the emotions; and a paragraph later the whole book seemed a linked chain of the coldest logic. It was reasoning enforced, but never thrown into the background, by brilliant illustration. He seemed to be learning all the time without the fatigue of study. He was conscious, too, that "rent" was bulking on his mental eye

like a monstrous dragon whose outlines one makes out slowly in a dim picture.

When Madden came in he talked to him of what he had read ; but it was unsatisfactory, for Madden did not seem to catch his meaning easily. Then Madden seemed to care little about the subject.

Ryerson did not again find himself alone in his room until Friday night, and he at once settled down to finish the book if possible. It was quite possible. He was now in the full swell of the stream. The slow pushing through the underbrush of past economic growths was over, and also the patient progress across the level until he reached the conclusion that the owner of natural opportunity—i.e., the earth—was literally "the heir of all the ages," labour and capital being but disinherited younger brothers. And now it was a triumphant rush to the sea.

He never forgot the night he sat up to finish *Progress and Poverty*. Madden came in at eleven, but soon took refuge in bed when he found that every time he reminded the absorbed Ryerson of his presence he got a fiery passage discharged at his head. Then Ryerson read on, his blood pulsing at the vivid picture of social injustice which these virile pages were presenting to him with convincing force. Poverty revealed itself as the great mother of crime, and monopoly of the Father's gift to all as the sinister mother of poverty. He had long classed himself as an

infidel, but these pages made a belief in an all-Father reasonable again. The terrible disarray of the world, which had seemed to him a disproof of God, now appeared rather as a proof that man had succeeded in baulking God.

But was He God if man could baulk Him? He put this question aside and read on. He became convinced at all events of the injustice of private property in land.

"Place one hundred men on an island from which there is no escape," he read, "and whether you make one of these men the absolute owner of the other ninety-nine, or the absolute owner of the soil of the island will make no difference either to him or to them. In the one case as the other, the one will be the absolute master of the ninety-nine—his power extending to even life and death, for simply to refuse them permission to live upon the island would be to force them into the sea."

He felt, with a touch of misgiving, as he drew nearer to the end, that he was losing his critical poise in the swirl of the stream—that he was not mentally certain, for instance, that the taking of rent for public uses would work the miraculous cure of poverty which Mr George so confidently promised; but he was sure that land monopoly was a giant injustice, and that it must be abolished, whatever the consequence. He would thrash out the details later.

Those last chapters on "human progress" satisfied that sense in him with which we perceive truth so perfectly as to give us a sensation akin to that felt at the feeding of a keen bodily appetite. At an especially luminous sentence he would lean back with the thrill one enjoys at a new discovery. But, under it all, he felt the plunging of a passion that was rage at the relentless grinding of the poor by the insensate laws which protect privilege, and was scorn for the leaders of the people who saved them not from these economic tyrannies, and was contempt for religious teachers who smote not this greatest dishonesty, and was a fervid resolve to do himself what he could toward liberating the unconscious many from this unperceived despotism.

George's perfect faith in the final victory of the right revived in him the mental pose of his earlier life; and the confident teachings of religion regarding the inevitable ultimate triumph of the will of God stirred again in his mind. If there were a good God, this man was His prophet. The succour of the poor—the lifting of man out of brutalising environment—was surely the work God would have men do. And the churches? They stood aside with alms in hands which should have borne a sword—they distracted our attention to the next world. And they had the Bible for it, and so were not greatly to be blamed. The poor old Bible!

He had finished *Progress and Poverty* now, and, going to the window, noiselessly pushed open the shutters and looked out on the starry distance and over the sleeping town. The cool night air quieted his fever. "This is a great book," he whispered to himself. "The reading of it gives a man a mission." Then he thought of the churches again, preaching their dead Christ and leaving this plain work of God untouched. And yet they only followed their mistaken Bible.

Then across his mind there came the passage—"Blessed be ye poor, for yours is the Kingdom of God." And, like a flash, his mind ran over the beatitudes as he had once learned them from Luke for controversial purposes until it paused at—"But woe unto you that are rich! for ye have received your consolation."

What did that mean? Was the Bible a campaigner for the poor too? Was Christ, after all, a social reformer? Had He been misjudged? He leaned farther out and straightened up to follow the new thought from text to text. Then across the night silences came the mellow tones of the town clock striking three; and he smiled at his ardour, closed the shutters and sat resolutely down to quiet himself with a book of out-of-door poetry he was reading in the odds and ends of his time.

XVI

ALLAN NICHOL was to Ryerson his most direct link with the "strike," and, now that his interest in the affair had been so keenly stirred, he found himself dropping in on Allan occasionally in the evening. Allan and his sister Alice were very much to each other, and as Ryerson's frank cheerfulness had soon made the girl feel at home with him, she often sat with them while they discussed with boyish enthusiasm the problem of involuntary poverty. Thus she came to hold strong opinions touching these subjects, which, with the magnificent disregard of consequences so startlingly common with her sex, she was prone to express defiantly and with some freedom.

The Nichols were pew neighbours with the Brownells, and Grace and Alice knew each other in Church work. So it came about that while they waited together one afternoon in the "vestry" for some other young ladies to come to a meeting, they fell into a conversation, upon whose placid stream Alice soon turned her heavy guns.

"There is not much mystery," she said, "about

the reason why the people have ceased to attend the services out at the East End Mission."

"No?" said Grace, with an apprehensive look, for Alice's tone was not suggestive of a pleasant revelation.

"There is certainly not," returned Alice, positively. "You cannot expect them to support the churches when the Church Charity Board takes sides with stingy employers against them."

"Oh," said Grace, very conscious that Alice's father was a striker.

"Mr Embury says," she went on militantly, "that the Church is the rich man's device for keeping the poor man contented with his lot—that's what he says; and he thinks, too, that the working people are fools to have anything to do with it. You just ought to hear him talk about the Church, preachers and all."

"Yes, he's very bitter," said Grace, sighing.

"Well, I'm not sure that there isn't some truth in what he says," persisted Alice, with great deliberation. "My father has stopped right off going to church, and I'm not sure that I oughtn't to do the same thing. Then you haven't noticed it, probably, but some of the girls are not nice to me at all since the strike."

"Oh, you must be mistaken," Grace assured her, eagerly.

"No, I'm not," she snapped out, and her face set like iron. "You watch them when they come in."

"But anyway," said Grace, with an added dignity, "that should make no difference in your loyalty to your Church and to religion."

"It is easy for you to talk," burst out Alice. "It's just floating down stream for you to be churchified."

"I've made my sacrifices," said Grace.

"You don't hear the Church criticised like I do," with a knowing cast of her eye. "The things that Mr Embury says are just awful; but he's clever, and Allan thinks there's no one like him."

"You must not let Mr Embury lead you astray," said Grace, solemnly. "He's an out-and-out infidel, you know."

"Yes," admitted Alice, with the air of one who thought of saying more and then thought better of it.

"I think," Grace went on bravely, though her forehead reddened and her heart came to a thumping "double quick" at a bound, "that Mr Embury is a very dangerous companion for—for anyone, and you must be on your guard against him."

Alice was silent. She knew something of the story of Grace and Ryerson, and she appreciated the courage of the girl before her.

"There may be men in the Church who do not do right by their employees," Grace continued; "but that does not make religion untrue, and the poor must get their souls saved as well as the rich."

On a subsequent evening Alice interrupted Ryerson with,—

"But, Mr Embury, even if there are people in the Church who do not treat the working classes right, must not the working classes get their souls saved?"

Ryerson laughed. "I'm not worried about my soul," he said.

"No, but shouldn't you be?" asked Alice, with a diffident seriousness.

Ryerson looked at her, wondering how much of his caustic doubt he dare pour into those tender ears. "Do you think that the preachers have a monopoly of soul-saving?" he asked presently.

"N—no," she replied doubtfully; "but mustn't one do Church work?"

"Not unless the work of the Church tends to lift humanity," Ryerson answered.

She thought over this for a full minute, and then said,—

"Ah, but I mustn't listen to you—I was warned against you."

"Whom by?"

"One who knows you well," she replied with some archness.

"Whom?" and he smiled persuasively.

"I'm afraid I mustn't tell."

Allan laughed his appreciation of her teasing.

"Very well," said Ryerson, making a feint of abandoning his inquiry. "But do you yourself

think she had any good ground for regarding me as dangerous?"

"I think so. I think you tried to make an infidel of her."

"She was a 'she,' then?"

"Oh!"

"But I didn't succeed in shaking her faith?"

"No, I'm sure you did not."

"But perhaps I did inside."

"No. She's going to marry a preacher."

Ryerson's face sobered and whitened in spite of himself. "Ah, well. It's your secret," he said nervously; but poor Alice knew that it was not, and that he wished sincerely that it were. He discussed with Allan the rest of the evening the marvellous fidelity of women to their religion—whatever it may be—and said so many bitter things that Alice left them early to themselves.

But her conscience smote her because of the slip, and she took the first opportunity of saying to Grace, with great penitence,—

"I did a terrible thing the other night. I told Mr Embury that someone had warned me against him, and then stupidly said things which made him guess it was you."

Grace's eyes flashed, and she set her lips.

"I'm very, very sorry—" Alice began, but Grace had walked away from her.

She came back again, however, in a few moments, and said, with a nervous little smile,—

"I shouldn't wonder if your mistake might do him good—that is, if he cares—if, I mean, he remembers who I am—"

"Oh, he remembers right enough."

"Of course. I suppose he could not forget that there is such a person as I—but—but he thinks me hopelessly prejudiced and—narrow—and—oh—old fogeyish."

"He's very outspoken, and I like him for the way he understands the working man and his side of it. He knows how we feel, and he sees that we are not treated right."

"I wish I could understand it all," said Grace.

"You could if you would listen to him and Allan talk. They say"—diffidently—"that Jesus loved the poor, and that He attacked the rich and powerful, and" (now she was hurrying) "that the churches do not follow Him when they do not do like Him."

"But I love the poor. My mother and I help a great many poor people—and so do other Church people."

"Yes, I know."

"And what can Mr Embury say to that?"

"I don't know," was Alice's response; and, like a sensible girl, she determined to find out. Consequently, it was not long before Ryerson had this remark flung at him across the round sitting-room table at the Nichols', with its covering of figured red.

"But, Mr Embury, the Church people do a great deal to help the poor."

Ryerson smiled indulgently.

"The Charity Board, for instance," said Allan.

"No I mean right straight along, on ordinary occasions. Take such people as—well, as the Brownells, for instance."

"Yes," sneered Ryerson, "coals and tracts! Such folk reverse the old saying and try to teach the people that the Lord will help them—in doles—if they will only not help themselves. I am for helping myself."

"Give us justice and we will not need charity," put in Allan, with the ring of an accustomed saying.

"The Brownells," went on Ryerson, pursuing his thought, "mean well. There is no doubt about that. Mrs Brownell is sweetness personified."

"And Grace is a good, good girl," added Alice, in a low voice.

"Yes," said Ryerson, in a voice still lower. Then the three sat in silence, until Ryerson said,—

"What a pity—what a pity that someone cannot open her eyes to the true errand of love in this life!"

"I think you could," said Alice. Her voice was almost a whisper.

Ryerson raised his eyes and looked at her with a serious gaze, full of inquiry and hope. Then he dropped them and said,—

"No. One must be trusted if he is to lead."

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XVII

THAT autumn was, indeed, for Ryerson Embury, full of preoccupied days and disputation nights. He became a regular visitor at "Black's," and put his feet on the unpolished stove until they began to build fires in it—and railed at the things that are, with the best of them. Someone got him to read *Felix Holt, the Radical*, during this time, and he considered seriously the wisdom of going without a collar, as Felix did, in order to mark himself off to all who looked as one who had come out from among this careless and self-centred generation. At the height of his exaltation he had difficulty in being civil to some of the richer clients who came to consult Webster, Saunders & Webster; but he was cured of this pretty well by a discussion one evening at "Black's," in which he had to defend George's claim that the capitalist and the labourer stand together as victims of the landowner and monopoly-holder.

One night at the Free Thought Club he raised the question of the Masterson-Williams strike, and the failure of the churches to do anything for the

settlement of it, or for the relief of the strikers. His proposal was that the club should step in and do both, thus proving itself to be more useful in the community than all the churches. The idea received instant support from several varieties of members. Some of the strikers were there; and to them such action meant not only help, but smashing proof to all their friends that they had been right in preferring the club to the churches long ago. Then several militant Free Thinkers saw in it a capital convert-making scheme—the labour people would be won over in a body.

Some conservative members, however, thought that this was hardly the mission of the club. They were truth-seekers—nothing more. "It would be a preacher's trick to rush into a fight of this kind simply to gain popularity." The discussion was finally closed by an invitation to Mr Embury to prepare a paper on the subject for the next meeting, when a decision would be arrived at.

The time Ryerson put on that paper made his attendance at the law office a mere formality. He read it to "Black's" the night before the meeting of the club amidst uproarious enthusiasm. Then he read it to the club—a crowded meeting. It began by proving the average working man to be a victim of injustice; then it discussed the strike; and finally appealed to the club to go to the rescue of the "under dog."

The debate that followed was one of the best

that the oldest Free Thinker could remember to have heard in the club rooms. Sharp difference of opinion appeared at the outset as to whether or not the charge of injustice had been established. Rycerson was accused of attacking the security of property, and he was over-zealously defended by men who contended that "all property was robbery." But the weight of opinion was in favour of the contention that the present social order is based upon injustice. When it came to enlisting for the war upon this injustice, however, there were not many who stood with Rycerson and the labour section. A very effective speech was made by the president of the club, who vacated the chair temporarily for the purpose, in which he argued that the present is a stage in a great evolution which has been in progress for countless ages, the central law of which always has been and is yet the good old rule of the "survival of the fittest." It was only natural that everyone—including the "under dog"—should strive to survive. Thus working men combined for that purpose. But the other classes have an equal right to strive to survive. And as the survival of the lion means death to the lamb, so the survival of the strong often means death to the weak. To interfere with the working of this law would be unscientific; and such interference, if successful, would retard by just so much the evolution of the race. It was their boast as Free Thinkers that

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they were not swayed by emotion ; and they must not in this case be carried off their feet by the suffering of the "lamb." It was best that the "lion," *i.e.*, the strong, should survive ; and they, as individuals, had but to play their parts as individuals, knowing that under the operation of this law the fittest would emerge from the struggle.

The Embury party could make no headway against this unimpassioned reasoning. Ryerson was excited, and, in closing, made his appeal on the ground of man's brotherhood, which the president easily dismissed as "a fiction of the religionists." At one time he began to gain ground by invoking the analogy of theft, and asking if the putting down of stealing interfered with the smooth working of the law of evolution ; but he was a new apostle of the "cause," and failed to recognise this firm footing when he reached it. So, after the meeting was over, he tramped back with his little group in discouragement to "Black's," and there learned that the "strike ration" had been reduced again that day, though it could hardly keep soul and body together before.

The next night the strikers met on a vacant lot just outside the town limits to discuss the situation. Ryerson, who had been wrapped in a ferocious gloom all day, went. Madden had tried to keep him at home.

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"I backed you up in talking to the club all right ; for that was professional. But they'll get you down as a 'strike leader' if you go talking over there ; and that won't help you with the Websters, you may be sure."

"They may get me down for anything they d——d please," was Ryerson's surly reply. "We kid-gloved fellows are grinding the life out of these strikers and their kind, and not one of us cares. The churches will save their souls for them if they will give up striking and swearing and the forgetfulness they can buy in a bottle ; and the Free Thought Club will school itself to endure all that anybody else suffers in order that evolution may not be interfered with. By Heaven ! I can't do much, but I *can* go down with the 'under dog.'"

The meeting was not noisy, but you would have said it was hoarse. It had been raining off and on during the day but had stopped at six. The air drifted from the north-east, chill and damp ; and the sodden ground was stiffening a bit with the cold. Two "head-lights" borrowed from the railway stood upon the improvised platform, and gave the only light, except that furnished by a group of torches which burned just in front of the speakers. The burden of the talk was the necessity for endurance. "If we give up now, we'll be kicked about by the bosses all our lives,"

said one of the Union leaders. A Union official from a distant city made the longest speech, in which he pledged them further financial assistance from the funds of the central Union if they held out. The cheers were not frequent, and they were feeble. The strain was telling cruelly, and the many shawled women who mingled with the crowd were absolutely silent. They seemed to have come to hear something they did not hear. The faces that appeared and shifted and reappeared in the channels of light streaming out from the powerful locomotive reflectors, spoke of hunger—hunger—always hunger. Some of the speakers were wildly vehement, lavishing stinging epithets and fiery exhortation right and left; but the restless, hoarsely-grumbling crowd were unmoved. One misguided man told a joke, yet no one laughed. The eyes that reflected back the shine of the head-lights—the wide, imploring eyes, the contracted, half-shut eyes, the enduring, patient eyes—all spoke of hopelessness and hunger. The platform was for “sticking out.” Very well, the men would “stick it out”; but did the platform know what it was to rise and dwell all day and go to bed again at night with hunger? The platform did, and the crowd knew it; and that is what kept them steady. Soldiers never endured with more steadiness.

Ryerson had pushed his way to the front and stood leaning against the edge of the platform

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while the speaking went on. His eyes followed those tunnels of light, and sickened at the patient hells they revealed. A man who knew him came across the platform, leaned down, and whispered,—

“Will you say something, Mr Embury?”

“Say something?” said Ryerson, looking up, the veins on his forehead showing. “I can say nothing but—but curse and stamp my feet.”

“Do it, then,” said his friend, putting out a hand to help him on to the platform.

In a few moments he was in the flickering circle of light made by the torches, and the people had been told who he was; but not a word would come to his tongue. A woman in the throng slipped on the freezing ground, and her weight came heavily on the arm of the man next her.

“Lean on yer supper, earn’t ye?” he growled, with savage ill-humour.

Her face twisted much as it would have done if she had smiled, and then she whispered, “I hadn’t none.” The shawl fell from her head as she straightened up, and Ryerson noted that her hair was streaked with grey. The crowd shifted restlessly at the long pause of the speaker, for it was cold.

“I have no right to say a word to you,” Ryerson began abruptly. “I have not gone without my supper once to help you in this strike.” Someone laughed, and Ryerson stopped again. He knew that he had struck a false note; but he could think

of nothing else—nothing at all. He seemed suffocating. The moving, hungry, chill-bitten crowd appeared a crawling horror to his eyes.

“By Heaven! men,” he cried out at last, as if calling to a shipwreck, “why do you suffer? Why do you stand it? You have the power in your own hands. No one can rob you—can wrong you without your consent. It is no lie when I tell you that you, the working, suffering people, can rule if you will. It is not a mere matter of ballot-marking either—you could rule if there were no ballot. The people have never tried to get a thing that they have not got.”

“Will Masterson raise our wa-ages?” interrupted a voice from the crowd.

“I believe,” said Ryerson, solemnly, stepping to the front of the platform and raising his hand, “that that is for you to decide. You can not only make him do it, but make him glad to do it.”

Several of the men nearest him laughed a jarring laugh.

“No, I am not cheating you with sarcasm,” cried the young fellow, his frame shaking with his excitement. “I am stating the absolute truth. I know that I can’t go into long explanations here, for you have neither the time nor the patience to hear me; but I’d just like to ask you whether you or the ‘bosses’ have the most votes.”

"Pile o' good that does us," grumbled a heavy male voice.

"Well, it should do you good," retorted Ryerson, vehemently. "You can govern the country that way. I'm not talking politics now, but Trades Unionism. I believe in Trades Unions as a war measure; and labour is always at war with its oppressors. But you must know who your oppressors are, and how to get at them. Now, I've no right to say a word except by your sufferance. I dare not criticise you or your leaders, for you have the scars of a hundred fights, while I am a boy and a novice, but, please God, a recruit in your army. I know strikes are good things very often; they've done much for labour. But I must take courage to tell you that if a man had a thousand loaves of bread in his pantry and I had none, I wouldn't sit down to beat that man by starving him out."

There were murmurs of approval in the crowd at this, and Ryerson waited for his point to go home.

"What would you do?" asked someone on the platform.

"What would I do? I'll tell you" replied Ryerson, turning part way round. "I'd make it impossible for Mr Masterson to pay lower wages by making it possible for his men to employ themselves at higher. You will dissent from me if I say that the employer

of labour is not necessarily the enemy of labour.

"You bet he is," and "That's right," from the crowd. "Masterson is a mean ——," shrilled a woman, and a few scattered cheers supported her.

"Don't mistake me!" urged Ryerson, flinging out his hand. "I'm not for Masterson. He has not used you fairly. He has lied to you and cheated you. But the kindest-hearted employer cannot give more wages than the competition of men like Masterson will let him. If he does, Masterson will undersell him and ruin him. Consequently"—and he straightened up and lifted his forefinger straight toward the zenith—"so long as you must work for these men or not work at all, skinflints like Masterson will fix your pay. But if you will take the land for your own use, you can always grow enough to feed yourselves, and presently you will have the Mastersons competing for your labour instead of you competing for their 'jobs.'"

"I'm no farmer," shouted a tall man with a glassily-shaven chin.

"Probably not," replied Ryerson, good-humouredly, "But two or three of the ten men competing for your job might like to farm if they had the chance; and if you vote a farm within their reach, they will be taken out of your way and will create a new centre of demand for the products of the factory and the forge. Open the land, and you

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lighten the pressure of competition on every man here—you raise the standard of wages."

"But we can't get the land," objected an earnest-faced man.

"Why can't you? It's yours. No one has a land title worth anything in justice. And you have the law-making power in your own hands. All you have to do is to stop protecting bad land titles. You have the taxing power; and through all time the men who levied taxes have been the masters of society. With this power in your hands, I marvel at your—moderation. I use no stronger word. You could use it now to tax your own land back into your own possession. But you—you seem determined to attack the foe with your weakest weapons. You simply stop work and starve, when you might—what might you not do? You—you—" and his passionate pity for them seemed to fill his throat. The crowd had waked up under the lashing of his impetuous speech; and during the last minute or two their patience had visibly melted into resentment. Now they watched with sullenly expectant eyes the tense form of the young man as he stood silent before them, plainly wrestling with his passion that he might bring it within the compass of words. Suddenly throwing both his hands out in a strong gesture, he said, in even, deliberate tones that were more thrilling than the wildest shout, "I tell you God's truth, men, right here, I would not sit still

and see my wife go hungry—if I had one—while other men fattened on my property. I would take it. I—”

But his voice was drowned by the first loud roar of the night, and it was full of menace. Cries mingled with it that grew in boldness and insistence. “That’s Masterson,” and “Burn the —— out” could be heard; and “Let’s try his cooking,” and commoner and coarser imprecations. During the long sullen summer these men had thought of more direct ways than the political of making the wealthy give back “their property,” and talk of this kind was not so new to them as it was to Ryerson.

Ryerson lifted both hands for silence; but the chilled crowd had got in motion, and they found the shouting and the stamping too pleasant to give it over at once. The labour leaders came to the front and called for quiet, but it was no use. “You’ve put a match to it, young fellow,” said one of them to Ryerson, not unkindly, “and we shall get the blame.” Ryerson stood back now, silent and pale, frightened and astonished at the passion to which he had apparently stirred that numbed crowd. He had no idea that a good deal of the display was no more than a mental stamping of the feet to wake up a sleeping circulation.

“That’s right,” he heard someone whisper behind him; “take them to the Labour Hall!” And presently the sound of a strong male voice could

he heard singing off on the right of the crowd. A slow quieting came over them, and the shouting was soon borne down by a swelling chorus in which they all joined, moving off in irregular marching order towards the centre of the town. The song was one which Rycerson had heard before and often heard again, it being the composition of one of the strikers and very popular with the men. The verses were sung by a young fellow with a vibrant tenor voice, and they all shouted out the chorus. It began :—

“Your hand is growing hard, my burly buster !
 Your fingers shine with oil and crease with grit—
 Your nails are broken jagged—
 Your working clothes are ragged—
 Your ‘Sundays’ lack a Piccadilly fit.
 But still you have the perfect satisfaction
 Of knowing there are men whose hands are white
 They neither break their nails—
 Nor dine in dinner pails—
 But they dine—oh, yes—they dine, most every night.”

The chorus, which had the swing of a chant, was—

“The hand that makes is the hand that should take,
 Trudge along, Knights of Labour, trudge along !
 The back that bears is the back that should wear,
 Trudge along, Knights of Labour, trudge along !
 Justice awaits us when we get awake—
 We shall come to our own when we dare !”

There were several other verses ; and often on occasion the author would write a special one fitting the circumstances. One of the original verses most commonly sung was—

“That boy of your's don't talk, my burly bucko !
Of culture and of college and of art.
Yet he learned to read and write,
And cipher and recite
As quick as those who now talk twice as smart.
He'll spend his life amid the soot and cinders,
But you'll be pleased and grateful to recall
That the *sons* of other men
For his dollar will make ten
By supplying him with work—and that is all.”

XVIII

AN afternoon shut in by a low grey sky and teased by a neuralgic, dust-lifting wind, several days later than the night meeting on the Common, found Mrs Brownell and Grace sharing a fire of soft coal in their sitting-room grate with Rev. Arthur Drake Walters, who was reading to them with copious comments from Shelley. He disapproved of Shelley's theology, and read him that he might show how easily a really well-read theologian could puff it away. And he was succeeding famously ; for Mrs Brownell confined her remarks to, "How very dreadful," and "To be sure," and "Isn't it a wonder that these men can't see how foolish they are !"; while Grace said nothing at all. Grace had grown older than the almanac would have told you since she walked straight, on homeward past Ryerson on that spring night not really so long ago. The face had lost a little of its roundness ; the chin was thinner and more distinct ; the eyes looked at you more seriously. She seldom busied herself with "fancy work" now, and sat this afternoon with her hands folded in her lap looking absently into the fire. Happily for the others, this was not with her an "intense" day, nor was she playing the madcap. She always knew

what Mr Walters was saying, though she felt impatiently at times that he was making much out of little.

"Are you sure Shelley means so badly?" she asked him once, and then he turned to the poet's prose notes and read passages that silenced her.

Presently there was a sound of girls' voices in the hall, at which Grace rose quickly—and without altogether concealing a breath of relief—to go out.

"Bring the girls in," suggested Mrs Brownell; and then to Mr Walters, "It is Grace's 'club,' I think. I always call it her 'club,' though it is only a few girls she has got in with lately."

"Yes, I know," replied Mr Walters, tolerantly; "the Morton crowd."

When Grace came back she brought with her four young ladies who had thrown their jackets open, but had resisted all invitations to lay them aside. There were the two Miss Mortons with two years' difference in their ages, but nearer ten in their minds; then there was Miss Dalton, a tall, slight woman of thirty-five odd—very odd—who wore glasses and had spent several of her superabundant years in Europe; and lastly there was Mrs Larry Burnaby, who chaperoned the party on occasion by virtue of her wedding ring, though she was easily the gayest of the quintette.

"Shelley!" sniffed Miss Dalton, when they had all made the proper number of greetings. "I call

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him 'Mary's little lamb,' though not because of any resemblance to the lamb's proverbial innocence, you may be sure."

"Oh, Shelley is all right in safe hands," Mr Walters assured them all impartially. "I have been making a study of him recently, with a view to lecturing to the college boys on his more dangerous tendencies."

"I should think," put in Mrs Burnaby, "that you might safely trust the college boys not to open him if you do not go and label him 'dangerous.'"

"Did you ever read *Miles Standish*—by Longfellow, you know?" Miss Carrie Morton, the younger of the sisters, inquired of Mr Walters with a little air of learning; but he ignored her question, turning to Miss Dalton with, "I am sure that you find Ithica dull after your long residence abroad."

"Dull? No," replied that lady, "not a bit of it. I find more human interest here than anywhere else."

"Ah, yes," he admitted; "that is true. As someone has well said, the whole ocean is in a drop of water."

"I shouldn't want to take his word for anything important," commented Grace; "for instance, whether a road was good for 'wheeling' or not."

There was a general laugh at this, more from good nature than amusement; but Mr Walters



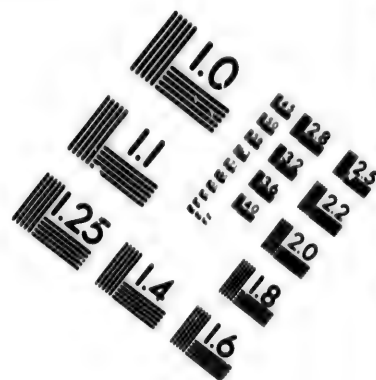
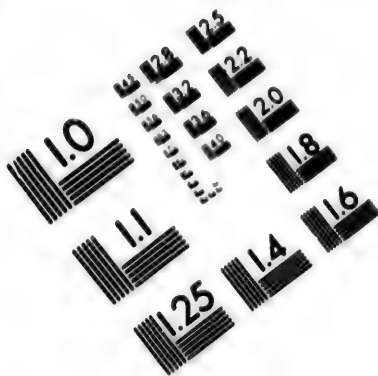
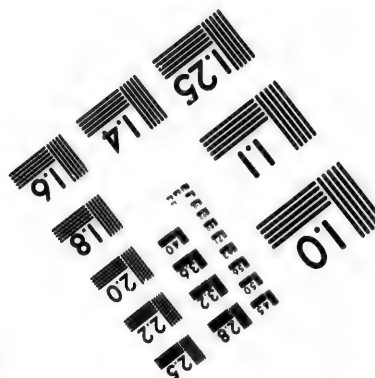
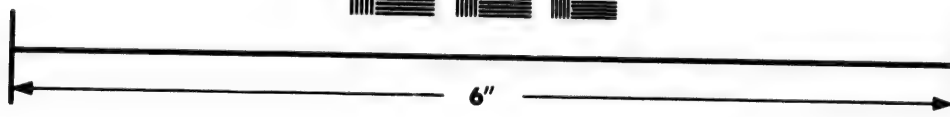
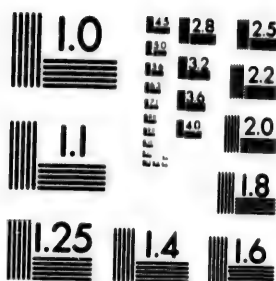


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turned smiling, but serious, to her with, "You do not understand my meaning, Grace. It is really quite true."

"Of course it is," Grace admitted with hurried emphasis, and another little break of laughter that was not without impatience.

After a time the circle was enlarged by the arrival of Dr Holden, who still loved Mrs Brownell's "talk exchange" of a dull afternoon, Mrs Masterson and Mrs Webster, the wife of the junior partner of Webster, Saunders & Webster.

Dr Holden was full of narrative this afternoon, and he usually could get a section of the ladies to listen to him. The others discussed the weightier matters of the law of autumnal fashions, and the social programme for the season, giving the doctor the pauses in their conversation. Miss Morton and Grace had a half-facetious, half-serious tilt with him over some severe remarks he was said to have made on the subject of the "new woman," which put Mr Walters in a state of excitement, for he was constantly apologising to the doctor for Grace, and explaining to that young lady the doctor's terse remarks.

Someone, in an unguarded moment, asked Miss Carrie Morton if she wouldn't sing something; but she assured those who were listening, with much elaboration, that she could not think of such a thing; she had learned nothing new recently.

"Nonsense, Carrie," said Mrs Burnaby. "You

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know lots of things. Give us one of your old ones."

"But there's no piano," protested Carrie, tugging unconsciously at the finger-tips of her gloves.

"There is in the drawing-room, and we can hear you quite plainly," Grace volunteered.

"But—I—don't—know—a—thing—worth—singing," insisted Carrie, with many a shake of her head, though by this time her gloves were off and her eyes shining with pleasure.

"Sing that beautiful thing you sang at the Epworth League meeting the other night," suggested Mr Walters.

Carrie then took her sister, who had tried to look unconscious through all the preliminary protestations, to keep her in countenance, and disappeared in the direction of the drawing-room, whence, after considerable whispering, she was heard to sing, in a sweet-toned voice and patty-pan manner, a religio-sentimental ditty, beginning—

"I should like to die, said Willie,
If my papa could die too;
But he says he is not ready,
For he has too much to do."

"Willie must have been a spirited youngster," was Miss Dalton's comment to Grace when the singing had ceased.

Meanwhile Mrs Webster was doing the vivacious and amiable to Mrs Masterson, whom she had long

thought worth cultivating, though the soil did seem a trifle cold and "clayey." She gushed over her flowers, she inquired after the health and wealth of the Ladies' Aid to which she belonged, and then she expressed sympathy at the long duration of the "strike."

"Oh, well, the Union leaders are making something out of it, I suppose," said Mrs Masterson, with a grim face. "It is to be hoped so, for no one else is. The men and their families are simply starving."

"I don't see why they won't take work when they can get it," commented Mrs Brownell, sighing.

"Why, you know, mamma" put in Grace, "it is because they cannot get pay enough."

"Pay enough!" ejaculated Mrs Masterson, turning sharply around on her. "Do you think that Mr Masterson will not give them all they earn?"

The blood mounted to Grace's forehead, but she said with calmness, "I'm only reminding mamma of the reason given by the strikers themselves."

"Oh!" was Mrs Masterson's short but sufficient comment.

"Weren't you frightened the other night when they talked of burning you out?" gushed Mrs Webster.

"Didn't know it till next morning," was Mrs Masterson's telegraphic response; then she added, "I believe, by the way, that we owe that outbreak to a clerk in your office."

"Oh, you mustn't blame Mr Webster for that. He said the other day that the 'young firebrand' you speak of won't be a clerk there very long."

"I should think not," said Mrs Masterson, emphatically. "William said, when he heard about Embury's speech inciting the mob to come and burn us in our beds, that he would have to find out if his own law firm intended to harbour Anarchists in our midst."

"The history of that young man is an object-lesson to all youth," remarked Dr Holden, sententially, with his fingers interlocked. "He flung away religion, and now he has the torch in his hand."

Someone was standing in the door as this was being said, and when they looked up, Mrs Brownell arose with, "Why, how are you, Mr Tracy? Come in, won't you?"

"I would like to see you just a moment, if that be possible," he replied, and then nodded formally to the two clergymen whom he knew.

"No, come in," said Grace, going up to him and giving him her hand. "We are just discussing your people, and they sadly need a friend here."

"You have proven yourself that," said Mr Tracy, mildly. "You and your mother."

Rev. Thomas Tracy was a short, spare man, with an anxious face and not a little grey in his hair. He had a blue eye that shone with kindness, though at times it flamed with the fury of a

fanatic when defending his "people"—the poor—from what he considered an unjust attack. His black coat was edged with braid now—it had not always been so—and the seams were unnecessarily noticeable. There was a patch on the side of his left boot, and his carefully-starched collar showed the coarser texture of the inner cloth at several points.

"It is on behalf of my people that I am come," he said in a patient voice as he took a tentative seat on the edge of a chair and balanced his hat by the brim. "I was going to appeal to your charity once again for several mothers who have neither food nor fuel this inclement weather," he went on, looking at Mrs Brownell.

"Why don't 'your people' work for a living as I've always had to do?" asked Mrs Masterson, sharply.

"Because your husband won't pay them a living wage!" he answered without so much as increasing the rate of his utterance.

"Nonsense!" she snapped.

"I think there are two sides to that, Brother Tracy," Mr Walters broke in, with an anxious geniality which marked him out as a peacemaker.

"No, there are not," was Mr Tracy's calm response. "There is no one in this room who would attempt to live on the wage that Mr Masterson offers to these people."

"Oh, that is quite beside the question," said Dr

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Holden, with impatience at so boorish a remark. "What would serve them in their station of life would not necessarily serve us."

"My Master is no respecter of persons," was Mr Tracy's unruffled reply; "and, besides, the pay offered these men would not suffice for a Christian livelihood." Then he turned his eyes a little wearily to Mrs Brownell, for he saw nothing to be gained in debate with settled prejudice.

Mrs Brownell rose to take Mr Tracy into an adjoining room to hear his story, when Mr Walters interposed with an air which was a nice blend of the confidential and the authoritative.

"Now, Mrs Brownell," he said, standing up, "I think we ought to consider this matter very carefully before acting. Do these people, who will not work, deserve help? Should they be encouraged in their obstinacy? Charity should pause before it leads to pauperism."

Mrs Brownell stopped irresolute.

The first smile of the afternoon hung like wintry sunshine over the face of Mr Tracy. "And a certain priest . . . passed by on the other side," he quoted.

Grace had risen, however, when her mother paused; and now she touched Mr Tracy's coat sleeve and said, "Come and tell me about it, mamma is busy with her guests." And then to the company, "I know nothing about the rights or wrongs of this strike, but I don't believe that

starving a man's wife to make him give in is—is even civilised warfare."

Outside with Mr Tracy she heard his familiar story, and then fell into general chat with him about the strike situation, in the course of which she casually asked what this report was about "young Embury's" incendiary speech.

"Mr Embury," said Mr Tracy, smiling, "has the zeal of the new convert. His eyes have just been opened upon the great modern struggle, and he's aflame with it. He's a Christian and he don't know it. That's all!" And the worn man smiled again.

"A Christian?" repeated Grace, with something of amaze and something of a budding delight in her tones.

"Yes," he replied simply, "a Christian is a man who fights for the weak and not against them. The boy has not had my religious experience, and he is the poorer for the lack; but he's with us—he's with us. And it looks as if he would have to bear some stripes in the cause."

"Did he really tell the men to burn out the Mastersons?"

"No, no! Though some of them understood him to hint at something of the kind. Others again think that he was trying to get the men to give up the strike, and some even accuse him of being sent by Masterson's lawyers to do this. But there's nothing in it. It only shows how easily a

man is misunderstood. I didn't hear the speech, but I guess that his heart was too big for his mouth—that's all. I've felt that way myself when the infamous, the irreparable wrongs suffered by the working classes have become especially real to me," and the little minister's eyes glowed as he turned them full upon Grace. "Sometimes I have felt," he went on, "as if the thing must be stopped right off—as if I must go out and take society by the throat and—" Then the sympathy in her face reminded him of how vehement he had grown, and he stopped short.

"Ah, well," he added presently, laughing in a noiseless way, "I am now doing ambulance duty—that is all. It is only a Christ who dare go into the very Temple with his scourge?"

XIX

THAT night speech on the Common did, as Madden had prophesied, get Ryerson into trouble. The very next day after its delivery, Mr Saunders called Ryerson into his private office and told him, with the real kindness that a jocular tone can often best carry, that that kind of talk was too expensive a luxury for either young lawyers or young preachers to indulge in. "The best clients of both preachers and lawyers are, you know, the men with the long purses," he said, "and they do not care for anarchy or arson or any of these exciting amusements in 'theirs.'" He went on to express the hope that no real harm would come of this speech. "I shouldn't wonder," he said with a twinkle, "if you were sufficiently beside yourself on that occasion to swear that 'the other fellow' made those pyrotechnic remarks. But," he added, "if that crowd had got down to Masterson's last night, the firm could not have retained both your esteemed services and Masterson's valued patronage."

When Mr Saunders had begun talking about the affair, Ryerson promptly decided to take the

first opportunity of telling him that last night's speech had not been any stronger than his most profound and calm convictions concerning the matter, and that he would continue to say such things as long as he lived. But Mr Saunders's manner of treating the affair disarmed him. The lawyer seemed to be moved by a very genuine and good-humoured interest in his (Ryerson's) welfare. His point of view was thoroughly worldly and thoroughly friendly. When Ryerson spoke of his own sincerity in the case, Mr Saunders accepted it as an admitted fact hardly calling for mention, but added that Ryerson could not help the strikers by losing his own chance in life.

"My boy," he said, standing up to put his hand on Ryerson's shoulder as he spoke, "I was young once myself. Most of us older men were. But you can't move the world until you get a place on which to stand—a sort of financial 'pou sto'; and," he finished a little sadly, "when most of us get that standing place, we don't want to move anything."

But it soon turned out that Mr Saunders was too optimistic about the results of Ryerson's speech. Mr Webster, the younger, was still to be heard from with his impetuous contempt of "freshness" and "fool talk" and everything that does not make for business progress; and Mr Webster, the elder, had not yet had his patent leather con-

servatism shocked by the outrageous and revolutionary language upon which this boy—this office boy—had ventured. Nor had Mr Masterson yet dropped into the office to serve a few sarcasms upon his lawyers touching "the future member of the firm," and the new *clientèle* they were bidding for.

When these more hostile voices were heard, Mr Saunders laboured with some patience and skill to smother them with banter. He talked of Ryerson as "an impulsive lad with a taste for speech-making," and thought that they should not "punish a verbal spree more severely than one of the alcoholic variety." When Mr Masterson stormed about a "firebrand," he objected with a laugh—"Nonsense, you mean a cigarette light." But their anger was not to be entirely laughed down.

So Mr Saunders took Madden into his confidence, telling him that Ryerson was still in danger, and suggesting that he delicately let him know this and keep him clear of further risk. Madden at once brought his tact and resource to bear on the situation, beginning by casting doubts carelessly into the air, when Ryerson was about, whether the workmen either understood or appreciated his harangue, and taking early occasion also to effect an alliance with Miss Josie Fitzgerald. Miss Josie was amazed that Ryerson should imperil his future deliberately in so foolish a way, but speedily

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came to look upon it as a new kind of intoxication to which the incomprehensible male animal was liable, and regarded it as her duty to woo him away from it, if possible.

Madden's expressions of doubt about the appreciation of the working men found the readier lodgment in Ryerson's mind because of some outbreaks of hostility toward himself in that quarter which he had heard lately to his own great amazement and chagrin. There was talk in the air that the strike was about to collapse; and one of the fellows at "Black's" had flung it in his face that his "d——d mealy-mouthed speech on the Common that night was chiefly to blame." On another occasion, when passing a crowd of workmen opposite a saloon, he heard distinct "groans," and one man had said something about "a limb of the law who did Masterson's dirty work." It was hard, indeed, not to see that the strike was on its last legs. The men were in a savage temper, and Ryerson began to stay away from their quarter of the town, for he got nothing but ill-looks and short answers when he went there. He did not know, of course, that that was all the discouraged and beaten fellows had for anybody, and he interpreted it as a feeling against himself for "meddling." The fact was that the leaders of the strike were preparing the men for a surrender. Two new circumstances had suddenly determined them to take this course. The whole

brotherhood elsewhere seemed likely to be involved almost immediately in a much larger strike, and they would need all their funds for the struggle. Then the Masterson-Williams combination had decided at last to take more aggressive measures, beginning by bringing in workmen from abroad. Now there were not enough workmen in the town of Ithica to make anything like an effective fight against the free admission of these new hands to the works, so they were reluctantly driven to the conclusion that it would be better to establish an armistice, at least for a time, in this part of the field. But no leader can abruptly pull down a flag with impunity; and these men, sore at heart at the necessity, were preparing their followers for the inevitable. Their plan was to call a private meeting and ask for permission to treat with Masterson and the Williams people, but to precede it with a public meeting at which Ryerson's "cue" was to be accepted and the wide possibilities of political action painted in promising colours. From this it will be seen that they had nothing to do with the "groaning" at Ryerson, nor the attacks upon the *bona fides* of his speech; but again the young man did not know.

One Friday—a fairly dark-coloured Friday for him—two notes awaited him at his boarding-house at night. Mr Webster, junior, had been curt with him several times that day, and he read in this the coming of the end to his law studies in

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that place. Then at noon a couple of Masterson's late employees whom he had come to know recently met him on the street and told him as a secret that the strike was to be called off soon, and talked of the news as if he (Ryerson) would be notoriously glad to hear it. They meant nothing offensive by this. Their eyes had been opened by his political action speech. But he knew how morose and depressed they all were at the failure of their great struggle, and his only thought was that they connected him with this failure and covered him with blame accordingly.

The first of the notes that he found at home that night was from the American labour leader asking him to speak at a meeting of the strikers to be held in the Labour Hall on Monday evening to discuss "the political side of the labour problem"; and the other was from Josie Fitzgerald, and read as follows:—

"IN THE PAINT ROOM (MISS TAYLOR'S),
"Friday Afternoon.

"DEAR MR EMBURY,—We are supposed to be painting, but most of the girls are chattering dreadfully. I need not add that Miss Holden is out. So I take advantage of the occasion and write a note to you.

"I want you to be sure and come out to Glen Ewart early on Sunday afternoon; and wear your best bib and tucker, for I'm going to take you

to call on THE EWARTS. Mrs Ewart said that I might. Now come prepared to look and talk your best.

"I heard a nice compliment about you on Tuesday which I'll tell you on Sunday. I hear Miss Holden's mincey-mincey step coming down the hall, so I'll rivet my attention on cobalt blue again.—
Your sincere friend, JOSIE."

The air of Sunday afternoon was full of sunshine and "charged" with frost. It was that kind of air which most nearly approaches champagne, and the walk out to Glen Ewart gave Ryerson an exhilaration he had not felt for many a day. He could not remember either to have ever seen Josie better dressed, yet she was by no means so alluring as usual. Commonly you hardly thought of her dress; it was the lithe, magnificent girl with her smooth, dark face and her constant suggestion of a full pulse and a curbed passion for movement that you saw. But to-day her gown had fettered her, and her gloves had conquered the elasticity of her hands, and her very hair was tortured into primness. However, Ithica could not produce better clothes. She looked Ryerson over as they sat talking a while in her little parlour, and if her eyes were to be trusted she could have criticised his dress at several points. She made no comment, however, contenting herself with pinning a rose in his buttonhole, he being "a

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And then they set out for the Ewarts. The Ewarts were the grand people of the entire district. Two or three families only in Ithica were on calling terms with them; and they spent much of their time away—in Montreal, New York and at the seaside. Rumour made them fabulously rich; but the free Canadian spirit of the district kept this from gaining little for them except isolation.

The Ewart house, which was grey stone and irregular, stood well back from the Glen Ewart road, and was reached by a winding drive-way, which passed through massive gates and by a lodge, and then buried the visitor in a great grove, broken at times by patches of sward. Finally it emerged at the foot of the slight eminence upon which the house stood, and led you under a magnificent porch at the side. Mrs Ewart, a genial, broad-faced "Lady Bountiful" for the neighbourhood, received them in a cosy little room off the hall, from which they could see through the open door into the wide parlours just opposite. A rich mantel with a polished mirror above it was the thing chiefly in view. Miss Edith Ewart, the daughter who notoriously assisted her mother in her charities, was the only other member of the family whom they saw. Mrs Ewart regarded Josie as one of her *protégés*, and readily acceded to her request for permission to

bring this young gentleman whom she "knew very well" to call on her on Sunday afternoon.

The talk began with the weather, and then veered abruptly to a discussion of Ryerson's profession. Mrs Ewart was delighted to hear that he was with Mr Webster. She knew "dear Mr Webster" very well indeed, a man of most proper opinions, and she was confident that Ryerson could not fail to succeed if he imbibed his chief's legal knowledge and moral principles. Josie was invited to tell of her experiences at Miss Taylor's, which she did with a reserve and yet a sprightliness so thoroughly in keeping with the tone of the company, that Ryerson, who had always permitted himself some boisterousness and easy manners with her, was conscious of surprise. The whole call, indeed, suggested delightfully an atmosphere of refinement. The light play of the conversation presently fell upon books, and he found that the reading of the ladies of the house had been confined to literature, pure and simple. They had read nothing strenuous, and they had lifted eyebrows for all so-called novels with a purpose. *Lucille*, Miss Ewart found to be a charming thing, but she had not read *Main Travelled Roads*, and did not think that she would like it.

As the talk went on, Ryerson cushioned himself more easily in his chair, and was conscious of a sensuous pleasure in the harmonious luxury

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of his entire environment. The unkempt side of life, the strain of life, even that tang of struggle which accompanies a fresh success, were not suggested by so much as an impatient thought. The world was a lady's parlour, literature was a flower garden, suffering and hunger were food for delicious pathos and were instantly to be relieved by alms, and he and a gloved Josie were to live in this world and no other.

He thought of "Black's," and that night on the Common, and the sallow, unshaven strikers; and a little shudder of relief passed over him at having escaped from them all soon enough. Madden had said that he would become known as a labour leader if he kept on; and what chance would a labour leader ever have to penetrate into such a life as this on anything like equal terms? And this was the life to be tried for. When he shook hands with Mrs Ewart, she again told him that she was glad he was with Mr Webster, and surmised that he might come out again some time with the Websters. Then Josie and he walked down the long, winding avenue with the low autumn sun in their faces; and that shrewd young lady perceived that the stage-setting which she had prepared in his mind for her appeal to his ambition had been most excellently chosen.

That night, in Josie's own little parlour, Ryerson renewed his vows to Success. He seemed to have been seized with a physical repugnance to

poverty and all its ill-shapen spawn. Compassion for the poor he would always have. Josie recounted the unobtrusive charities of Mrs Ewart until the giving of alms rang in his ears as genteelly as the striking of the deep-voiced clock in the long hall at the Ewarts'. But to fellowship with them, to risk sharing their poverty, to be classed as one of them and be barred thereby from the soft carpets and rich hangings of refinement, surely it was not he with his passion for the beautiful who had ever thought of making such a choice. Mental pictures of the strike leaders came into his mind, and he laughed at the idea that he should choose their companionship rather than that of—well, names did not matter. Josie's constant mention of the Ewarts had at last stirred in him a fear of possible toadyism.

And Josie herself was now a hearthstone companion a man might well labour to win. She had escaped from the harness of the afternoon's parade, and was again the lithe, gipsy Josie with her masses of black hair and her gift of home-making which touches the young man as a gush of warm light through an unshuttered window will a lonely traveller in a foreign city. He liked to see her hold her hands to the colour-flinging fires in the grate-like stove, while her loose sleeves fell back from the rounded forearms and the light reddened and paled on her smooth cheek. He

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liked to have her push a chair into place for him, and then coax him to tell her how Madden and he arranged their furniture in their room in town. He liked to see her stand upright before him with her hands clasped behind her while she told him, half in mockery and half in earnest, that she had not yet decided whether she would have him become a judge or a member of Parliament.

Then just before he left she asked leave to talk to him seriously. He turned to her surprised and asked what the matter could possibly be. He cast about rapidly in his mind, but could think of no other girl of whom she could by the wildest exaggeration be jealous. Well, she said, and she plainly found it difficult to go on, did he know that his generous help to the labour men was putting his whole future in danger? He had heard something of that, but was confident now that all danger was over.

"Not if you do it again," she said a little anxiously.

"I don't think I'm apt to," he replied lightly; and he smiled into her eyes all his appreciation of her interest in him.

The skies were spangled with stars as he walked home, and he looked at them and drank of their splendour and thanked God that he had not linked his future to the grey clods which never went starward unless they were flung there in anger.

XX

THIS Sunday had been a busy one to the Rev. "Tommy" Tracy. Most Sundays were, indeed, with their two services, their morning "class" and their afternoon Sunday School; but this day a new task had fallen to the little man's lot which had kept him so busy that he had quite missed Sunday School altogether — a happening so unwonted that the scholars thought more of it and its possible cause than of the "lesson."

It came about in this wise. The night previous Mr Tracy had been invited, as he frequently had of late, to meet in council with the strike leaders to discuss the ever-darkening situation. They were all building their hopes now on the success of Monday night's meeting. That was to fire the men with enthusiasm for the new policy of political action, and thus prepare them for the temporary abandonment of the strike programme. But they were disturbed now with misgivings as to the prospects for a successful meeting. They had been depending almost entirely upon the practised rhetoric of an imported speaker, and the contagious

enthusiasm of Ryerson Embury's young optimism ; and here they were not sure of getting either man. The outsider had telegraphed that he could not possibly be there, and Ryerson, when seen on Saturday, had been very indefinite about his intentions in the matter. "The men won't listen to us talk anything but strike," they said; and as for "Tommy" Tracy, he was a preacher, and so was without the confidence of the men in practical matters.

"Why," said Mr Tracy, emphatically, "Embury will come sure when he knows the importance of it."

"I don't know," commented one of the men, doubtfully. "He's in Websters', and I hear that they're putting the screws on him."

"That won't stop him," Mr Tracy assured them. "He's made of the right stuff. I'll see him tomorrow and get a positive promise from him for you." And this accounts for "Tommy's" busy day.

He went around to Ryerson's boarding-house immediately after dinner, but, of course, found him gone to Glen Ewart. Madden was there, however, and good-humouredly assured his caller that he might as well save himself further trouble in the matter—that Ryerson simply would not speak a word on Monday night.

"How do you know?" "Tommy" asked in the best of faith.

"Because he is not a drivelling idiot," was Madden's prompt rejoinder—equally in the best of faith. "Now, look here," he said in an explanatory tone, "it would cost him his place in the office to make that speech, and surely you don't want him to risk that. Why don't you make a 'talk' yourself?"

"Tommy" looked at the confident young man silently for a few moments, and then he said, "It may cost him his soul if he don't make that speech," and turned away. Madden hugged himself at this, and presently, when "Tommy" was out of hearing, broke out into a loud laugh.

"By cricky," he said, "those preachers are always jingling the keys of heaven and hell at you. The moment they become concerned in a thing they promptly elevate it to a test of salvation. I'll tell that to old Ry the moment he gets back from Josie's, and then he couldn't go down to that meeting and make a soul-saving speech with a straight face."

Now "Tommy" journeyed up the street and took counsel with himself. What should he do? He must get that promise from Ryerson. But he had more doubt now of his ability to win the desired promise single-handed. Ryerson, he recalled, was nominally a Free Thinker, and he did not know exactly how to appeal to such a man. Then he remembered that he had heard somewhere that

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Ryerson "kept company" with Miss Grace Brownell; and, knowing that she was a friend both to the poor and of himself, he determined to see her about it—all of which shows that Maddens and ministers are not so far apart in the study of tactics after all.

He hurried on to the Brownells', and found Grace and Rev. Arthur Drake Walters settled down in a sunny corner of the drawing-room to an hour's preliminary study of the Sunday School lesson of the day, before Mr Walters would have to meet a late Bible class of young men at the First Methodist Church. He liked to go over these lessons with Grace, to accustom her, he said, to a scholarly study of the Bible. "Should you ever happen to become a minister's wife," he would add with arch jocosity, "you may have to teach a Sunday School class sometime;" at which Grace would look thoughtful but say nothing. Grace went to greet Mr Tracy with outstretched hand, and gladness in her eyes; while Mr Walters greeted him from his seat with inquiring eyebrows and an official nod. He liked neither the man nor the untimeliness of his "call."

Grace at once asked whether any of Mr Tracy's "friends" were in trouble.

"They all are," he replied simply, "and I have come to get some help from you."

"Now, look here," broke in Mr Walters, with an unconscious quotation from Madden, "don't you

think there ought to be a limit to your coddling of those fellows?"

"‘Those fellows’ are my brothers," replied "Tommy," without resentment; "and I can tell you that they show precious few signs of coddling just now."

"I know," went on Walters, throwing himself back in his chair and running his fingers through his luxuriant hair, "that I have no right to call you to account; but don't you ever think that you may be dragging the Christian ministry into disrepute by consorting with law-breakers and encouraging lawlessness?"

"My Master was accused of consorting with ‘publicans and sinners,’" said "Tommy."

"Ah, yes," replied Walters, straightening up and flinging his finger out at "Tommy." "Quite so. But in so far as the charge was true, it was for the purpose of wooing them away from sin."

"‘Ditto’ in my case," said "Tommy," leaning back and interlocking his fingers in his lap. "But," he added a moment after abruptly, with an ominous glint in his eye, "my Master did spend His life with the poor and for the poor, while you are spending yours with the very class of men who crucified Him."

Walters's face went white and then red. "You are very insolent," he said.

"Frank, you mean," said "Tommy," and his eye was mild again.

Grace had been listening to the colloquy with a heightening colour of her own; and when it threatened to stop here, she asked, with a little catch of excitement in her voice, "But what do you mean, Mr Tracy, by saying that we—that is, Mr Walters's congregation—are the class who crucified Christ?"

"Not you, Miss Grace," he replied kindly. "I would rather put you in the household of Joseph of Arimathea—"

Walters gave a contemptuous shrug to his shoulders, as one who would call attention to an act of doubtful candour or courage.

"But," Mr Tracy went on, "it was the Pharisees who crucified Christ, and they were emphatically the churchly sect of the time, and their sin was that they took advantage of the weak and oppressed the poor. And the men who in this day answer to that description are to be found in just such churches as yours. Mr Masterson, for instance, has the third pew from your own."

"And I suppose that Mr Masterson and Mr Brownell are Christ-killers," cried Walters, getting to his feet, while anger filled his face and rode on his voice.

"It is not for me to judge," said "Tommy," without so much as unlocking his fingers, "nor," looking up with a firm eye, "for you to dilute the Scriptures. You know as well as I that Christ said, 'Inasmuch as ye did it not to one

of the least of these, ye did it not to Me.' And you know what the Board of Charities did; and you know what side your Church has been on in this strike; and— But there is *one* judgment I *will* give," the worn minister exclaimed, suddenly interrupting himself and getting in turn to his feet, "and that is this," commanding Walters to silence with a gesture—"the Pharisees were the religious leaders of the people. They took upon themselves the responsibility of interpreting God's truth to man like to no class in our day save and except the clergy. They betrayed that truth; and the merciful Christ, who had condemnation for so few, poured His fiercest indignation upon them. And I believe in my soul that the section of the clergy who this day fail to preach the gospel of brotherhood, letting the Mastersons think they are following Jesus when they sweat the poor and divide the spoil with the Church, come under the very condemnation that Christ thundered out on the Scribes and Pharisees."

Neither Grace nor Walters had moved while the frail preacher, with a burning eye and the high-pitched voice of the terribly-in-earnest, poured these words upon them; or, rather, seemingly through them and upon some shadowy but immense concourse beyond. Walters was the first to move, and it was only to sit down. At this Mr Tracy appeared to come to his everyday self again, and his eyes turned full of apology upon Grace.

"I am sorry to have said these bitter things to you," he said. Then with a smile—"They don't often escape me. It's no use—no use. But you—you have been good to my people, and no one who loves the unfortunate can fail of the love of Christ," and he moved nearer to her and put out his hand as if with a vague notion of comforting her.

"I fear," said Mr Walters, speaking very quietly, "that you lose sight of the spiritual side of Christ's teaching in your zeal for 'your people.'"

"No," replied Mr Tracy, turning towards him with a smile that was good-humoured if rueful; "but you can't get up much spiritual exaltation on an empty stomach, nor in a thoroughly tired man or woman. Then I really see in Christ's teaching more about feeding the hungry and banishing poverty generally than about spiritual joys. Christ had a passion for the distressed and the outcast—He even made a Magdalen His travelling companion."

"A thoroughly repentant Magdalen," corrected Walters in a shocked voice, looking apprehensively at Grace.

"A repentant Magdalen!" Mr Tracy repeated after him in that voice in which one repeats a notoriously unworthy excuse for a bad action. "A repentant Magdalen! I know of no phrase that is more suggestive to me of a mocking and sardonic irony. A repentant victim! If I were going to say it, I would have said an escaped Magdalen."

"Yes, possibly, yes," Walters said confusedly, getting up. The subject was embarrassing to him when Grace was present, while poor "Tommy" never thought of that phase of it—there was so little room left in his mind for the mapping out of the "dark continent" of life which society does, roughly, into the domain of the young female, the wider domain of the married female, the still wider domain of the married male, while the young male has a roving commission and may know more before marriage than he dare admit afterwards.

Then Mr Walters discovered that he must hurry away to get to his Bible class, and rather anxiously asked "Tommy" if he were going down toward the town too; but "Tommy" sat down with the remark that he had come particularly to see Grace about something important and would wait a little longer. Grace went out into the hall to see Walters get his broad-brimmed clerical hat, his light overcoat, and his "stick," and start for the church. He took advantage of the chance to do some emphatic whispering, warning Grace to be very careful and not let "Tracy" draw her into any doubtful undertaking.

"I have grown up," said Grace, laconically.

"You must remember," urged Walters, "that he has some most extraordinary ideas of Christian duty. You can't put faith in him like you can in most ministers, you know." And he carefully ad-

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justed his hat on his head and buttoned his overcoat with both eyes riveted on the glass in the hat-rack. Otherwise he might have seen a furtive smile on Grace's lips.

"He seems to me to live nearer to the life of Christ than any minister I know," she said in even tones, but a speck of red showed in each cheek.

"Eh!" said Walters, giving a last set to his coat; then, realising her meaning "But you're joking."

"No," said Grace; she was smiling now.

"Ah! but you must be," he assured her genially. "How would you like me to take his church and—wear his—do as he does, I mean?"

She said nothing to this, but her smile was touched with pity—or was it scorn?

"Well, I must start," he said briskly, holding out his hand, in which she laid hers. "When do I get that first kiss, Grace?" he asked, drawing her toward him.

"Not now," she said quickly, freeing her hand. "Not—not till I say so," she added more calmly.

"When will that be?"

"Ah, you must not wait for that, Mr Walters. I've told you not to wait for me. I'm afraid it will never be."

"Nonsense, Grace."

"Yes," she went on quickly, "there are times when I am sure that it will never be; and then—and then I am not sure. But you must not wait."

"Why, I would wait as long as you wanted me to," he said with a kind of wooden emphasis that killed her seriousness.

"Well, your class won't," she retorted with a nervous laugh.

"No," he agreed, brightening up. But he paused a moment before going to the door, and presently said, "Well, there really is no hurry yet. An unmarried minister gets along all right until the time comes for him to take a big church by himself. Then"—and his smile was patently roguish—"he needs a wife. Good day," and he was off.

When Grace got back to the drawing-room, "Tommy" began at once and told her the whole story of the plan to save the strikers from being caught between two fires and wiped out, how important it was that the "political action" meeting should be a success, how entirely that depended upon a strong speech from Ryerson Embury, and what powerful influences there were at work to keep Ryerson from speaking. Among these latter he did not mention Josie, for the good and sufficient reason that he knew nothing of her.

Grace showed neither weariness at his tale nor surprise that he should tell it to her. Was she not interested in all that concerned "Tommy's" people? Her eyes—and they were of a tender blue—had the flash of admiration in them when he dwelt upon the effect that Ryerson's speech was sure to

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produce on the men, and "Tommy" felicitated himself on getting along so well. When he spoke of the influences that were working to keep Ryerson from using this power, her lips—and they were mobile and a soft red—pooh-poohed them away; and "Tommy" interpreted this to mean that their owner knew that a word from her would have this effect. Then he recounted his conversation with Maddy that afternoon, at which both eyes and lips showed their fine scorn, and said that he was going back in the evening to get the young man's promise for the anxious strike-leaders, and that he would like to take a note from Grace telling Ryerson that she thought he ought to speak—"just to make sure."

"A note from me to Mr Embury!" exclaimed Grace, and both eyes and lips now spoke of nothing but amaze and dismay.

"Yes," said "Tommy," simply, nodding his head with complaisance.

"But—but—why, we don't speak now," she managed to get out, and then blushed at the childish phrase.

"A lover's quarrel?" asked "Tommy," with a serene smile, meant to be knowing but succeeding in being no more than humorously solicitous.

"No! No!" Grace denied with heated emphasis. "We are not lovers. Who could have told you such a thing?"

"I can't remember," said "Tommy," reflectively;

"but I certainly thought that you were 'keeping company.' Probably I should not have bothered you about this, but I'm very anxious—very anxious to make sure of him for to-morrow night." And "Tommy" thoughtfully beat the back of one hand into the palm of the other and looked ruefully out of the window.

"Well, but," said Grace, after a pause, "surely the Websters will not object? Is not this a speech to make the strike stop?"

"Ye—es" said "Tommy." "That is expected to be one effect of it, but not in the way that the Websters will like. This strike may stop temporarily, but the men are to be urged to get prepared to make a better fight for their rights next time. There is to be no stop to the war on the oppressors of the poor. This is only leading the men out of an untenable position in order to make a fiercer fight elsewhere; and there is no guarantee, for that matter, that the next battle may not be a more effective strike."

"Oh!" and then there was silence for a time.

"If," Grace began presently, "if"—but there seemed to be trouble about going on—"if you want to get a young lady to influence Mr Embury, you should go to the one to whom he is supposed to be engaged."

"Who?" asked "Tommy," looking up with new interest and in perfect good faith, for he was a very simple-minded saint. He even looked toward

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the door and showed himself ready to go the moment he was given the puissant young lady's name.

"Miss Fitzgerald of Glen Ewart," said Grace, stiffly; and "Tommy," whose eyes were on her face, for the first time arrived at an inkling of the true situation. But it was a hazy inkling at best. "Tommy" was no carpet clergyman.

"Miss Fitzgerald? Nonsense!" he said, leaning back in his chair. "A man of Embury's type will care little for her—about as little as she would care for my people."

"Do you know her?" inquired Grace, surprised.

"Enough." Then there was a thoughtful silence for a time.

"I tell you what I wish," he said presently. "I wish you'd come to the meeting to-morrow night."

"Why? What good could I do?"

"Much. The men will appreciate your sympathy."

"Well"—thoughtfully—"I guess I could get Suzette to take me."

"I don't want your answer now. I want you to write it to me, and I'll call for it about six to-night."

"Oh!"

"Yes; and I want you to say how much you want the meeting to be a success in your note."

"Oh, I can't."

"Yes, you will. The future of two hundred

families may depend on it. If the strike goes on and these outside men once get into the foundries, I don't know what will become of many of the strikers and their families."

"But you wouldn't show it to him?"

"Yes, I would; and I had rather have a stroke of your pen than the strongest word from that daughter of a tavern."

At this Grace blushed furiously and quite forgot to reprove him for referring in such a manner to poor Josie, as she should have done.

"I don't think I could," she said presently, biting her lip.

"Well, I'll call at six and see if you have, anyway," he said, getting up and going out into the hall for his hat, smiling the while covertly to himself.

Grace followed him to the hall and watched him prepare to go out into the frosty air.

"Oh, you needn't call," she said presently. "I can get Jamesy, Suzette's little brother, to take it down to you."

"Is he trustworthy?"

"Oh, yes. But, of course, I may not write it."

"No?" and he gave her his hand in parting. Then he opened the door, and, bowing, was passing out into the porch when she called after him, "I'll come to the meeting anyway."

And he smiled still more knowingly as he looked back and nodded approval.

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XXI

"TOMMY'S" visit to Ryerson's boarding-house that night was of no avail, of course, for Ryerson was in a silken dream of beauty worship at Glen Ewart. "Tommy" waited for him a while, however, and Madden came in. He was then assured again, on that young gentleman's vociferous authority, that it was no use to worry Ryerson about that plaguey meeting to-morrow night.

"Why should a man do a thing so diametrically against his interests?" Madden demanded of him, standing like a tripod before him with his legs apart and his cane forming the third leg behind him.

"Because it is man's duty to do good to his fellow-men," replied the preacher.

"Why is it?" insisted Madden, with an argumentative smile on his lips.

"Because—because God says so," was "Tommy's" answer.

"Bosh!" rejoined Madden. "Do you think you can talk that kind of thing to a sturdy Free Thinker like Ryerson?"

"I don't know," said "Tommy," with his inevitable simplicity; but he thought of it a good deal as he tramped back presently toward his comfort-

less room in the "tenement"—the one building of the class in Ithica.

Madden had intended to tell Ryerson of these visits of "Tommy's" in the morning, and put him in a proper attitude of humorous contempt towards "Tommy" and his appeals by dwelling on the little preacher's religious tone; but when he found that young man full of admiring chat of the magnificent Ewarts and humming his old song about her cheek being "rosy" and her name being Josie, he determined to leave well enough alone.

When they had been at the office a little while, Mr Saunders came to Ryerson with the request that he would help him in the preparation of an important case then on hand. Ryerson was delighted at the chance and eagerly assented.

"It will mean some night work," Mr Saunders remarked, "and I should like to begin to-night."

"Very well," said Ryerson. "Shall I come up to your house?"

"Yes, about eight. You won't fail, will you?" and the old lawyer gave him a keen but kindly look.

"No; I should be afraid of losing the chance," was Ryerson's instant reply.

So matters went along until nearly noon, when a lad handed Ryerson a note. He tore it open and read,—

"MY DEAR EMBURY,—Will you lunch with me to-day at Dawson's? I want you to meet a man I

have long known very well, and whom you must know by reputation—Mr Wilson Crawford. He is only in town for a few days, which accounts for this unceremonious invitation.—Yours sincerely,

“THOMAS TRACY.”

“Jehoshaphat!” ejaculated Ryerson, tapping the desk with his finger tips in his perplexity and surprise. “‘Tommy’ giving a lunch at Dawson’s and to no less a person than Wilson Crawford. Why, all I know of Wilson Crawford is that he is always spoken of as the founder of the Ithica Free Thought Club—the last sort of a companion for the evangelical ‘Tommy,’ I should think. Of course, I’ll go—it’ll be like a mental salad.” And he accordingly told the boy that Mr Tracy might expect him.

Madden was not so enthusiastic over the affair. He distrusted “Tommy” since the day before.

“I don’t believe he’s got Crawford in tow at all,” he declared.

“Then what’s he asking me to lunch for?” asked Ryerson.

“See here, old man,” said Madden; “I didn’t tell you, but ‘Tommy’ was trotting after you all day yesterday to get you to go to that labour meeting to-night, and I suspect that this is a little game of his to get you alone with him where he can tell you, as he did me, that you might lose your soul if you don’t speak at that meeting.”

"Whew!" whistled Ryerson, thoughtfully. "I never thought of that. Say, I don't want to talk to him about the matter either."

"Don't go then."

"But I've promised. How about Crawford, though?"

"A blind."

"No—o—oo, I don't believe it. 'Tommy' couldn't put up a 'straight one' like that."

"You might be late."

"No, I'll go, and if 'Tommy's' alone I'll make short work of the lunch."

But "Tommy" was not alone. Wilson Crawford sat with him awaiting Ryerson's arrival. Mr Crawford was a man of middle age, but over middle height, with a kindly, wholesome, serious face and humorous eyes. He wore a beard and a bushy head of hair, and his smile was a perpetual guarantee of good faith.

The oddly-assorted pair sat chatting at a table near the entrance to the main lunch-room at Dawson's—a room that found in that town of mid-day dinners its chief use as an ice-cream parlour—but, at the arrival of Ryerson, "Tommy" sprang up and led the way importantly to the most private corner that the inner room of this decidedly non-metropolitan *café* could furnish. And it was worth something to see "Tommy" play the host. He had arranged all that was possible beforehand, had reserved the exact table he wanted,

had made sure that they would have something "to be ordered" for lunch, and had impressed upon Mrs Dawson herself with great pains that Crawford was a man who had seen the world and would appreciate her best efforts. "Tommy's" relations to the worldly and travelled Crawford may as well be put down here. As an old Ithica boy, Wilson Crawford came back to the town from time to time, and always took a close and practical interest in the progress of the foundry men, and, indeed, of the working classes generally. He was commonly understood to be a student of the "labour question," and there was a club in New York where he was known as "the mild-mannered Mirabeau." It was no uncommon thing for him to take a room for a month in "Tommy's" tenement, and the facts there learned made copy in many a magazine that neither "Tommy" nor the tenement ever heard of. It was here that he met the hard-working, cheerful, patient little minister, and as he grew to know him, his lips grew less and less ready to say bitter things of the religion the little minister professed. "I'm beginning to think there's as much in Methodism as in Mohammedanism," he said to "Tommy" one day; but the minister with his direct mind made nothing of the saying. At the same time, "Tommy" came to love Crawford for the help he brought to his beloved people, and to admire the magnificent calm of his judgment in dealing with their perplexities. It is needless to

say that the devout "Tommy" yearned over him as a father might have done, and prayed for his "conversion" with fierce earnestness, though he ventured little upon direct verbal appeal. For under such attacks Crawford was at his worst and lacerated "Tommy's" tender spirit with biting blasphemies.

Now, on the previous evening, when the perplexed minister walked slowly home from his colloquy with Madden, wondering how he could best appeal to the Free-Thinking Ryerson, it suddenly occurred to him that Crawford was providentially in town and would be just the man to take the lad on his own ground. So he hit upon the idea of the "lunch" and obtained Crawford's promise to come, telling him much of Ryerson's new interest in the labour cause and of the importance of having him speak at the meeting, and a little about his connection with "Free Thought."

While lunch was being ordered and served there was no conversation, only the flipping about of disjointed remarks. "Tommy" was restive and bothered, for the duties of entertainer in a public luncheon-room weighed heavily upon him. He peppered the waitress with questions, not always in a low voice, and kept up a fire of suggestion to his guests. Finally they settled down to comparative calm, however, when Crawford and Ryerson drifted into a discussion of "the strike" as a means of ameliorating the condition of the underpaid workman. Ryerson, who had never seen

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but the one strike had a pretty poor opinion of it as a method of warfare; but Crawford related several brilliant successes that had been secured by this weapon.

"It is simply one method of attack," said Crawford in conclusion, "no more to be always employed under all conditions than the cavalry charge. Sometimes it is very effective, and sometimes it is like the sacrifice of the Light Brigade at Balaclava."

Then they talked of the existing strike in Ithica, and "Tommy" was at great pains to show how hopeless it was to go on. Still the men seemed determined. "You know Mr Nichol," he said, turning to Ryerson, who nodded; "well, when Grierson, one of the leaders, you know, called on him on Friday night to get his consent to the calling off of the strike, Nichol got up without a word and, going out into the hall, threw open the front door; then he said to Grierson, 'This house has a mortgage on it, put there to keep the strike going, and you'd better get out of it at once for fear the mortgage falls through the roof and hits you.' The men are very bitter, I tell you; and if we can't get them travelling another road to-night, there will be fewer of them left than of the Light Brigade. Embury," he said, turning to Ryerson again, "you simply must speak."

"On what compulsion must I?" asked Ryerson quoting his Shylock and laughing a little nervously.

"Tommy" hesitated a moment at this question,

and then glanced at Crawford, as much as to say, "This is in your bailliwick."

"Because of the *noblesse oblige* of the aristocracy of truth," said Crawford, leaning forward as one who ceases to be a spectator and becomes a participant in the game.

Ryerson turned this over in his mind a moment and then said, "Ah, but Mr Tracy exaggerates. There are other speakers; and then I—it is particularly awkward for me to take part in such a meeting just now."

"As to that," said Mr Crawford, "your own judgment must be your only guide. But I have come to the conclusion that it is not well for him in the sum of things who knows a truth that the people need and who will not speak it."

"Yes, I believe that," said Ryerson, slowly; and he sat twiddling with the stem of his goblet for quite a time.

"I appreciate your position," Mr Crawford went on, "and I have not a word to say to influence you, one way or the other. Mr Tracy thinks that the fate of the night rests with you. I don't know. Your better plan may be to go on, get to be a lawyer, and then make your fight for truth. The decision must be with you. But I certainly believe that there is an imperative obligation upon the man who knows a saving truth to preach it, and to give his life to the preaching of it, in the manner he judges to be most effective."

"That's good Christian doctrine," said "Tommy," nodding approval.

"Yes, I think it is," returned Crawford, emphatically, turning to his host. "Jesus of Nazareth preached the truth of truths without ceasing until they killed Him for it."

"The truth of truths?" repeated Ryerson, inquiringly.

"Yes. Brotherhood—love—which presupposes liberty and justice."

"Isn't that a new doctrine for you?" asked Ryerson.

"No, not very new," replied Crawford. "There was a time, to be sure, when I was so enraged at the false Jesus—at the Jesus who is not seen until He is lifted up on the cross—whom the churches insisted on presenting as the only Jesus, that I failed to see the living Jesus of the Gospels; but I have long since found Him out." And a smile of serenity lit up Crawford's strong face. "He was the greatest of reformers, my boy," he went on, beaming upon Ryerson. "He attacked privilege at a time when privilege was impregnable. He fought for the poor when they were so little able to fight at His side that there was no uprising at the Crucifixion. He preached a system that meant food for the hungry, and clothes for the naked, and liberty for all, and He said so unmistakably, and those who think of Him as only promising happiness in another life have either misread His teaching or not read it at all—which is the more likely. The

method of reading the Gospels by 'passages' is the mother of much misunderstanding."

"But the miracles and—and—all that?" Ryerson asked almost automatically.

"If you have been a Free Thinker to any purpose," Mr Crawford began impressively, "you have learned that truth is not a creature of authority. It makes no difference whether truth is uttered by divine lips or by human lips, whether by Jesus or by the man possessed of a devil, or by the devil which possessed the man, it is always truth. Now the men of the time of Jesus did not understand this. They wanted their truth vouched for by divinity; and they recognised their gods by the way they played pranks with their own laws. To what extent Jesus worked 'wonders' as a means of obtaining the confidence of the people among whom He taught, or to what extent they were only imputed to Him by His biographers, I do not know, and, in the presence of a militant Mr Tracy, I am not going to guess. But I do know that He taught truth, and that is the point that interests me. He insisted, for instance, upon the equality of the human family."

"Like Henry George," commented Ryerson.

"Like Henry George," agreed Crawford. "And talking of George," he went on, "did you ever read the land law of the Jews which they are said to have received from divine sources?"

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"Well, you look it up. It comes nearer to the George principle than any code I know. The fact of the matter is, my boy, that we, who discarded religion because we found it made a stalking horse for the plunderers of the poor, have simply given up a weapon that is properly ours. Every great religious leader has had but the one purpose of rescuing the suffering section of humanity. Look at Buddha and at Moses."

"But of Christ?" asked Ryerson, turning back to the subject concerning which Crawford's talk had most stirred his surprise. "Aren't you giving a one-sided picture of his preaching?"

"Look at it. Look at it!" said Crawford. "Take that part of the Sermon on the Mount in which He advises them to take no thought for what they shall eat or drink, or wherewithal they shall be clothed. 'But seek ye first the Kingdom of God,' He says, 'and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.' Now, did that mean anything? I put it to Mr Tracy—Was Jesus in earnest? If so, it meant that if these people obtained the Kingdom of God they needed not to worry any more about food and raiment. And what interpretation of the phrase 'Kingdom of God' will fit that except 'a right social order,' as a friend of mine puts it, in which he believes and I believe that every man should be able to feed and clothe himself by simply doing the thing he would choose to do."

And so the chat went on until long after lunch was eaten, now of Christ's teaching, now of the laws for the relief of the slave and the oppressed in the Old Testament, now of kindred teachings by religious teachers in other lands and times. And the lad's brain sang with the new thoughts that crowded in upon it. The fire of the old religious spirit which had taken him to the altar at more than one "revival," which had made him vow himself stubbornly to God's service at the close of that last "revival" nearly two years before, though he could not "get saved," burned again within him. He felt the imperious hand of the ancient "ought," which has come out of the unknown in all times to compel the obedience of the chosen crusaders, press heavily upon his shoulder. Yet he feared himself to be simply mastered by a greater mind, and he fought back any emotion as likely to cloud his reason. He wanted opportunity to think. So after testing the confident doctrine of Mr Crawford with as many questions as came to him, he dropped out of the chat, and thought and thought while the other two talked on regardless of him, now that the topic of their hearts lay open before them.

Was this, then, Ryerson asked himself, the real Christ whom these two men—the one a Free Thinker and the other a Christian minister—saw? Was this why the "common people heard him gladly"? Why, surely. The Pharisee was a

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religious man—the pillar of the Church; and his sin was not unchurchliness, but that he bound heavy burdens upon men's shoulders, and devoured widow's houses, and omitted the weightier matters of the law. judgment, mercy and faith. Surely, surely! Why had he not seen it before? There is nothing so bitter as to be misunderstood; and could it be possible that Christ was now enduring this bitterness at the hands of the great majority of those who believed themselves to be worshippers of Him? What sin, what black, damnable sin was theirs, who first cloaked His teaching in spiritual garments and stole His name for a rose-water creed!

And religious instinct! Was that really, as Crawford said, always properly a force seeking to compel the strong to deal justly with the weak and to lead us all to love one another. He hastily tested this idea by as much as he knew of the religions of the world, and concluded that it might be so. He listened at times to the two men who seemed never to stand still in dispute, but always to go forward hand in hand. This point of view was all new to him. Had he actually "found Christ," as the preachers would say?

"Tommy," however, did not forget him. When he said something about going for a walk and then back to the office, "Tommy," sly dog that he was, pretended not to hear him, but went on telling Crawford how deeply some of the wealthier Ithicans were interested in the strike.

"Here, for instance," he said, with a magnificent carelessness, "is a letter I got last evening from a daughter of Stephen Brownell, wishing us success at to-night's meeting." And he handed the missive over to Mr Crawford to read. When he got it back again, he passed it on to Ryerson as a matter of course, without once looking at that young man. The unconscious manner in which this was done would have deceived Sherlock Holmes, but poor Mr Crawford had to repeat his last remark to the little preacher three times before that individual heard enough of it to misunderstand it. This is what Ryerson read:—

"Sunday Evening.

"MY DEAR MR TRACY,—I have seen Suzette and it will be easy for us to avail ourselves of your kind invitation and attend the labour meeting to-morrow night. Suzette's father and brother are among the strikers. I am glad to go with Suzette, for it will show how thoroughly I feel myself to be with these workers—I who have been so sinful an idler.

"I sincerely hope that the meeting will succeed. These men of our own town ought not to be sacrificed for lack of good leading. Then what will become of their families?

"It must be magnificent to be able to win the confidence of these men and lead them out of danger. No work could be nobler.—Yours for the people,

GRACE BROWNELL."

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Under this Grace had begun to write something else, beginning, "If you men are afraid—"; but had evidently thought better of it and crossed it out.

Ryerson read the note twice and then sat a while longer, in what was nearer reverie than thought. It was a May day in the wood by the river that was chiefly on the surface of his mind. Underneath, the currents of thought plunged and whirled and beat upon the banks. Once he thought of Josie; but there was a curl upon her lip as she watched a body of grey-hued strikers straggle past to their meeting. She glittered before him, but he was weary and felt a sort of passion to kiss again the rosy, soft, flower-like palm he knew so long ago. The eyes above the palm were liquid with sympathy. Then he roused himself. This was boyish. What a mental attitude for an aspiring leader of the prosaic people!

"I will speak to-night, Mr Tracy," he said, getting up and abruptly interrupting a monologue on the opportunity of the Church in the perplexity of the poor by Mr Crawford. "If I should change my mind, I'll let you know before six," he added with an eye to his recent wavering.

The little preacher broke into a delighted smile, got up and shook hands with the young man warmly and long, and then, spreading open his coat tails, sat down again without saying a word, but still smiling almost audibly.

XXII

RYERSON did not go back to his office, but walked about for an hour and then went to his room to leave a note for Madden, telling him briefly that he had decided to speak, that he knew what it meant to do so, that he would not be back again until after the meeting, and asking him to see Mr Saunders and explain. "Please tell Mr Saunders," he added, "that I am very grateful for the interest he has taken in me, but that I am conceited enough to think I have a duty to do in connection with this labour movement."

Madden got the note at half-past four, having hurried up to the house to see what had happened Ryerson who had not turned up at the office since lunch. He had begun to suspect "Tommy" very sincerely early in the afternoon, and his heart was hot against the little man. When he read the note, he rushed back to Mr Saunders for advice. The lawyer heard him through his excitement, and then read the missive for himself.

"I should do nothing if I were you," he said finally, looking up at Madden with a face that a fanciful person might have thought to be tinged

with regret. "Embury has chosen the better part. We will get more strawberries and cream in life than he; but he—well, men will be loving him yet when they can't read our names on our grave-stones."

At eight o'clock the Labour Hall was packed to the window sills. Men stood pressed together down the aisles, some of them coatless. A few bonnets of the pitifully plain kind were to be seen in the audience, but it was mostly a mass of heavily-breathing men. The air was already thick, and many of the men were still smoking. A grumble of talk was to be heard from all sides, and not a few of the voices jarred with the note of anger. There was hardly a face to be seen that was not sullen, except some which were red and quarrelsome. The little group of leaders on the platform were both apprehensive and defiant. Grace Brownell sat just below the platform to the right, with Suzette on one side and Suzette's brother on the other. She heard little of the preliminaries until Ryerson came on through the platform door accompanied by Rev. "Tommy" Tracy and Mr Crawford. Instantly a storm of hisses broke from one corner of the room, and picked up an occasional supporter in different parts of the hall. A brawny chap with hairy hands and prominent eyes, sitting exactly behind Grace, seemed to her to hiss more loudly than any other dozen.

"What's that for?" she asked nervously.

"Nothing, miss," said Suzette, with a reddening face and fugitive eye; "I don't know."

Suddenly the man behind her stopped hissing and shouted viciously, "Muzzle Webster's watchdog!" A great shout of approval went up, and then she knew why they hissed.

The rest of the night was full of wild excitement, chill terrors and mad anger for this child of a sheltered fireside. At first she was furious that they should dare hiss the man who had given up so much to come and speak to them. Then she began to understand. Their cries showed that they thought he was trying to stop the strike. But he began his speech by praising the system of striking as a means of securing the rights of labour, giving them some of Crawford's instances of success, and they soon fell into quiet. Then he neatly dove-tailed into an account of a successful strike an instance in which the taxing power was used even more effectively; and his road was open to him. The taxing power he declared to be labour's heaviest weapon; and he drove home his point with so many illustrations—illustrations which touched closely the lives of those who listened—that the men heard him intently and "s-s-sh-ed" down every interrupting sound. From this he went to the moral aspect of the question. "No class of citizens would," he said, "deliberately adopt and steadily adhere to a line of action that

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they thought to be morally wrong. Unless I can show you that you have a moral right to tax the wealth that lies in land values and public franchises into your pockets, I am perfectly persuaded that you will do nothing of the kind, no matter what you may think in the heat of the moment." With that he turned to the immorality of landlordism and the moral title of every man to a full share in the common heritage.

The close of his speech was an appeal to them to get together and fight with the ballot. It was here that the young eloquence upon which the strike leaders depended told. He had not been wholly free from interruptions from the first, and at times he had been compelled to endure quite a fusilade. But this last part of his speech brought nothing but cheers from the crowd. They liked to be told that they were the kings of the new day, even though they were not certain of getting any breakfast. But Ryerson was not satisfied with emotional assent to his metaphorical coronation of them—he laboured with tremendous earnestness to make them realise its truth. And to an extent he seemed to succeed. Men looked at one another as if asking mutely, "Have we been fools all our lives? Have we cringed before a power that was never there?"

Clearly the speech was a success. The faces on the platform told of great relief. But Grace was mentally black and blue all over. The crowd had

never spared Ryerson when they disagreed with him. Epithets hurtled at him; cries came that impugned his motives most cruelly; low altercations reached her ears in which profanity was a running flavour. Words and expressions she had never before heard, but the meaning of which she could not escape, fell upon her mind like blows; and when they were aimed at Ryerson, who loomed before her, half martyr, half apostle, they seemed to bring the blood. Some in the audience appeared to her to pursue him with malignant hatred, and the hairy-handed giant behind her was one of these. Her heart exulted at Ryerson's courage, at his eloquence, at his success; but she felt that she was beginning to hate and fear "Tommy's" people.

Fortunately for her, the future was to give her a truer view of the great army of the Sinned Against, those whose misfortune it is that they have not

"... that repose

Which stamps the caste of Vere de Vere."

They may be Sansculottes, and their women may be Mænads when the sins of the oppressors have forced them far enough, but, for all that, they are but men and women, fighting chilled steel with bare knuckles, and opposing to the satin politeness and the lightning word-play of the practised and the powerful what jagged repartee has been permitted them. But the first sight of *les misérables*

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to the tenderest eye is not always certain to evoke sympathy—much less understanding; it may bring horror, or even superficial condemnation.

After Ryerson was through, Grace's one thought was whether they would see each other after the meeting, and, if so, what she would say and what he would say. But though he came to the edge of the platform, and, nodding joyously to her, prepared to jump down and go to her, some meddlesome men called him away into a back room, and she felt that she could not wait until he returned. So she walked silently home with Suzette. When Ryerson got free, he followed, but the Brownell house lay dark behind its shrubbery. He stood wondering if he could with any decency call tomorrow, when a voice from the gateway called him. It was Suzette.

"If you'll walk up and down for a few minutes, I'll tell Miss Grace you are here," she said. "She don't expect you, I know," she went on, "but she might come out."

Suzette's light footfall along the path touched his emotional nature like the lilt of a love song. The stars twinkled with a softer light—they seemed indeed to wink at him with knowing friendliness. The very dark which but a moment ago had been chill and unfriendly, now caressed him. He leaned on the low gate and waited.

A door closed. There was a swish of drapery against the pebbles. A form grew out of the dark.

"Grace!" he whispered toward it.

"And to think," came an answering whisper, "that I thought you were not good."

"Don't think of it," he suggested to the shadow. "Let us begin all new again."

Then she came a little nearer, and he could see her hand where it held her cape together.

"It was magnificent," she said.

"What?" he asked, though he knew well what she would say. There are some things we like better in conversation than to be informed.

"Your—your carrying the flag before those men," was her answer.

"Poor fellows," he said. "I hope it will help them to avoid disaster."

"They are so rough," she commented, shuddering a little.

"They've had no chance to be anything else," he reminded her quickly; "but if my fighting can help at all, we'll do what we can to get them a 'sunnier exposure' in life after a while."

"That will be a noble work."

"After a talk I had with a man to-day, I feel like saying—what I wouldn't have said yesterday—that it will, if carried out, be a Christian work."

"Was 'the man' Mr Tracy?"

"No, but he was there."

"Mr Tracy has changed my point of view very much lately," said Grace, after a pause.

"Yes?"

"Yes. That's why I think—I think you are good."

But this is so little the conversation that should have passed between a man and a maid under the sympathetic stars that we may well cease the reporting of it. Later, however, they were both leaning on the gate, and Ryerson was telling of his plans. He knew that his dismissal from Webster, Saunders & Webster's awaited him in the morning. Then he would pack up and go home till he had a chance to think things out. Then he would try the world again. Grace had nothing but contempt for the "firm" which had tried to stifle him, and breathed the warmest wishes for his future into the night.

"Well, I really must go in," she said finally for the fourth time.

"Well, good-bye; and thank you for the chance to say it." And he held out his hand into which she placed hers. It trembled a little until he held it firm. "I suppose," he went on, "I shall see some day that you are married."

There was dead silence at this. The passing of a breath of wind through the shrubbery was audible.

"You know," he added presently, "how deeply I wish you happiness."

"And I you," she answered quickly.

He laughed. "But I am not marrying," he said. Then there was a longer silence. Grace broke

it, speaking with difficulty. "I was told that you were going to marry Miss Fitzgerald."

Ryerson tried to see her face, but failed. "Are you joking?" he asked.

"Why, no," she said. "Why should I be?"

"Well, then, someone else is," he went on. "If you knew Madden, I should blame him."

"Then it is not true?"

"No. I have never spoken of marriage to Josie. She is a splendid girl—but, for one thing, she would not look at me now that I have no prospects.' She told me as much last night."

"Last night?"

"Yes. She talked all sorts last night against me speaking to-night. She is entirely out of sympathy with me in this crusade."

"And if she were not?"

"Then she would not be Josie Fitzgerald."

She drew away her hand as if just realising that he was holding it. He made a momentary effort to detain it; but, remembering Walters, let it go.

"You must not take Miss Fitzgerald's refusal too much for granted," she said presently. "Girls cannot always be judged by what they say at one time."

"Oh, nonsense!" he exclaimed impatiently. "We would not marry in any case. We are not of the same mental 'pitch' at all." (This may have an over-emphatic sound, but it must be remembered for Ryerson's exculpation that there was a wide

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difference between the "mental pitch" of the lad who sang "Josie's the girl for me," and that of this young tribune of the people.) "And then," he went on, "it is absurd to talk of my marrying anybody. Here I am ejected from a law office, with no idea of what I am going to do for a living, and committed to a cause which will close many a door to me. The soldier had always best be a bachelor."

"Do you think a wife would hinder him?"

"No—o. Not the right kind of a wife. But it must be a barracks life for the woman."

"Women who love do not fear that"—and Grace's voice was not too steady.

Again he looked at her searchingly, but again the dark hid her face. It was only a tender oval with two moving, shining Will-o'-the-wisps for eyes.

"Good-bye," he said again simply, holding out his hand for hers once more.

"Good-bye," she said, giving him hers; "and do not expect to hear of my marriage," she added, "for I am engaged to no one, and have no prospect of being so."

And then he could not do other than stay and bid her "Good-bye" all over again—a half-hour later.

XXIII

JUST a little before noon on the following Saturday, Grace Brownell and Ryerson Embury walked up and down the platform of the railway station at Ithica, waiting for the train which would pass Fordville.

Ryerson had not been disappointed in the results of his Labour Hall speech. The Websters, father and son, had said their "say" to him; and Mr Saunders had joined in their reprovals, officially, and then had given him a strong letter of introduction to a Montreal lawyer—an old schoolmate boasting a labour *clientèle*. Dr Holden had written a letter of condolence to Ryerson's father, pointing out that the infidel path leads to worldly failure. "God cares for His own," the doctor wrote, "but there is no promise for those who reject Him. I hope you will labour with your son with prayer and good counsel. I know that you yourself are always in the way." Ryerson did not know of this letter then—for the only word he got from home was an urgent request from his father that he come home and help him through the winter with his school (a transparent fraud, for the

old man was never better), to which his mother had added a postscript—"Your old room is waiting for you. Don't bother to bid all your old teachers, like Dr Holden, good-bye." This last injunction puzzled Ryerson not a little, and he never knew why it was written until he was turning over his father's correspondence after his death, and found Dr Holden's letter. It was endorsed in his father's shaky hand, "My lad was not an infidel when he left my care for that of Dr Holden."

The strike, too, was over. The men had voted the next night after the meeting to "go back," and prepare to conduct the battle on more promising lines. They were not too happy over it, but already the women began to wear brighter faces. Ryerson had been asked to come back later in the winter and address their Union again on lines of practical political work.

As he paced up and down the platform now with Grace in the keen air, both faces bore the look of confidence and settled happiness. Their talk was tinged with self-pity at the long separation in prospect, but they were too newly re-united to really feel much more than their joy in this. The sadder hours would come later. Presently Madden stamped up the platform and joined them.

"Is three company?" he asked.

"Yes, if you are one of the three," said Ryerson; and Grace, who had met him during this last week, joked him about being so fond of Ryerson that he

had planned to go down to Fordville for the coming Christmas.

"Well, if wishes were Pullmans, I wouldn't go alone," he retorted, whereat both Grace and Ryerson turned redder than even the air warranted.

Allan Nichol came up soon, and then several of the others, and Grace talked of running away. "Not a bit of it," said Madden. "We are your bodyguard, Your Majesty."

"Tommy" was a late arrival, but he at once took Grace under his care, assuring her that it was all right to be there with her "favourite clergyman."

"That is what you are," Grace admitted, which led Madden to ask the little minister what he did with his marriage fees when he had no wife.

A rising blur of smoke away up the track told that the train was coming. Immediately the boys all seemed to have business either in the station or out on the rails, and Ryerson and Grace were left alone for a last few words.

"You are sure you are not sorry?" asked Ryerson.

"Sure! sure!" and her eyes swam with earnestness.

"It may be a long, hard fight, little one."

"But we will be together," was her response. Then their hands met and clasped, and they looked into each other's eyes with a passion that was more than many caresses.

As the train rushed in, "Tommy" came running up with, "Hurrah! here they are. I was afraid you would get off too soon."

At this Ryerson and Grace turned and saw the men from the two foundries swarming on to the platform from both sides of the station. "Tommy" gave Grace his arm and led her aside. The men were cheering Ryerson as they came, and now pressed about him, shaking his hands as fast as they could reach them. They had heard of his expulsion from the law office, and they knew the reason for it. "Good luck to you," "You'll be all right yet," "You're the stuff," "Come again," and "Good-bye," and "Good-bye" again, were the kind of thing they were all saying to him at once. Ryerson was saying nothing, but just taking their hands one by one and blinking strangely. Grace saw the tall man with hairy hands, who had sat behind her and so frightened her at the meeting, push his way through to Ryerson and exclaim, "I've faith in you, sir. You'll do something for us yet." And she never again was so quick to shiver at the rough earnestness of the Sinned Against.

The conductor called "All aboard," and Ryerson stepped on the platform of the car. Madden had already taken his valise in and come out again. But the train did not start at once. There was an awkward moment, and then one of the men began singing a favourite song among them just then.

They all joined in, and, just as the train pulled out, their voices rang the chorus—

“He’s the man they call M’Ginty,

He’s one man out of twinty,

And we’re going to have M’Ginty for our nixt M.P.”

And Ryerson looked back on a sea of whirling caps and swaying figures, and above them all fluttered a tiny white handkerchief waved by a white hand; and he knew that the palm of it was made of crushed rose-leaves.

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